

THE *R.B.A.S.* 22.

H I S T O R Y
OF
L O R D S T A N T O N.
A N O V E L.

By a Gentleman of the *Middle Temple*,
Author of the TRIAL, or History of CHARLES
HORTON.

I N F O U R V O L U M E S.

V O L. I I I.

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THE
HISTORICAL

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Nov. 4, 1929

Lord STANTON.

A NOVEL.

By a Gentleman of the Middle Temple.
Author of the TRIAL, or History of Charles
Houston.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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(This being Twelve Shillings)

THE
HISTORY
OF
LORD STANTON.



LETTER XXXII.

Continuation of Afgill's History.

“ Represented to Mr. Harper,
“ I in the intervals of his grief,
“ that his wife had desired to
“ see him; that he could be
“ of no service now to his children, but
“ might be the means of preserving the life
“ of his Adeline. He was determined not
“ to quit them while they had any life; and
“ it was with the utmost difficulty that my
“ arguments prevailed upon him to go to

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“ Lon-

“ London, which he consented to, upon
“ the condition of my staying with the
“ children, which I had voluntarily of-
“ fered.

‘ But do not be so cruel as to hurry me
‘ away from them without taking a last
‘ look, a long farewell of them. The
‘ grave will soon hide them from my sight:
‘ but, shall not their remembrance live
‘ with me? Hapless innocents! I did not
‘ think to lose you so soon—But I shall
‘ speedily follow you.’

“ He tenderly embraced the little ones,
“ who were insensible of his caresses or his
“ tenderness; and, giving a sigh, *that*
“ *seemed to shatter all his bulk*, hid the tears
“ that ran in torrents from his eyes with
“ his handkerchief, and rushed out of the
“ room without speaking a word, threw
“ himself into the chaise, and went off to
“ town. It was then late at night, and
“ the physician told me they could not
“ survive the morning. The mortal dis-
“ temper baffled all the art of medicine,
“ and

LORD STANTON.

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“and could not be controuled. The
“hurry and agitation of mind had pre-
“vented my indulging any reflections on
“the melancholy scene I was engaged in.
“But now I was left alone, I had an op-
“portunity of giving way to the dismal
“ideas that suggested themselves to my
“imagination. Ever anticipating misfor-
“tune, I feared that the death of these
“two boys, which nothing but a miracle
“could save, would kill the unhappy
“mother, in whose life her husband’s was
“centered. I concluded he could not sur-
“vive her, and began to lament my friends
“as if departed. I felt for the wretched
“pair, and though not the father of a
“child, conceived how distressing the loss
“of them must be. From the misfor-
“tunes of others my mind gradually re-
“curred to my own, and I found myself
“as unhappy for the distresses of others,
“as ever I had been for my own. Among
“all the evils I had suffered, the loss of a

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friend was not among them: except my
father, I had lost none whom I could
grieve for; and I had been so long se-
parated from him, that I could not feel
his death so severely as if accustomed to
live with him: but grievous would be
the loss, if either of my good friends
should be snatched away from me, just
as I had recovered them, just as I began
to take the good they had procured me.
My eyes enjoyed no rest: my mind thus
agitated, one disagreeable idea succeed-
ed another, and affliction took posses-
sion of my soul: it was heightened, when
an attendant came to inform me that the
eldest boy was breathing his last. Tho'
I was prepared for this account, yet it
gave me such a shock as I could not
recover for a time: not on the child's
account, but for the woes the miserable
parents would suffer, did I lament. I
jumped out of bed, and hastened to the
room where they were. In a few mi-
nutes,

“ nutes, the child expired : the younger
 “ did not survive him an hour. All my
 “ trouble was now useless and ineffectual;
 “ and leaving them in the care of a do-
 “ mestic, I prepared to return to London.
 “ The sight of me would confirm the
 “ wretched father in the loss of his chil-
 “ dren. To avoid being the messenger of
 “ such melancholy tidings, I made the
 “ physician prepare him for seeing me.

“ The moment I appeared he ran to me,
 “ and throwing himself on my bosom,
 “ wept like a child. I mingled my tears
 “ with his, and truly sympathized in his
 “ sorrows.

‘ They are dead, then, Afgill ! My little
 ‘ ones are no more !—My boys are gone !—
 ‘ both gone !—Heaven has claimed them—
 ‘ they are at rest in the bosom of their
 ‘ Creator.—But,’ added he, after a small
 pause, and looking at me with unspeak-
 able affliction painted in his face, ‘ my
 ‘ wife, my Adeline is going too.’

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“ There was something so inexpressibly
“ mournful in his manner of pronouncing
“ these last words, that it opened every
“ source of compassion and tenderness in
“ my bosom, and I wept aloud.

‘ You weep because she was your friend—
‘ But she is my wife !’

“ He could speak no more, but threw
“ himself into a chair, and I sat opposite
“ to him, when we remained for a time as
“ the statues of sorrow. At length I
“ found spirits to ask him, if he had seen
“ her. He replied he had twice ; but that
“ he could not bear the sight of her, it af-
“ fected him so much. That she was ex-
“ tremely ill, and never saw him but she
“ asked him after his children, and fre-
“ quently called upon them. That he
“ knew very well that her death would be
“ occasioned by that of her boys ; and she
“ was so ill then, that he had little hopes
“ of her recovery. However, that he em-
“ ployed himself in offering up prayers
“ for

“ for her being restored to him, and hoped
 “ they would be acceptable in his sight, who
 “ alone had the disposal of life and death.
 “ About the evening, we received an ac-
 “ count that it was supposed she would be
 “ brought to bed, and at midnight she
 “ was delivered of a daughter. This was
 “ very pleasing tidings to my friend. How-
 “ ever, his hopes were damped in the
 “ morning, when he heard that she was
 “ worse than ever, and delirious. He was
 “ now more wretched, if possible, than be-
 “ fore. We passed three days, in which
 “ she continued in that state, in a series of
 “ lamentations. He would receive no
 “ comfort, nor could I offer him any com-
 “ solation. His sorrow seemed to increase
 “ by the continuance of it, rather than di-
 “ minish; and to add to it, the child was
 “ so ill that she was not expected to live.
 “ On the fourth day the prospect seemed
 “ to brighten a little. Adeline enjoyed a
 “ much better night than she had hitherto.

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“ done, and her senses seemed to return,
 “ for she knew the people about her. We
 “ now began to indulge ourselves in the
 “ pleasing hopes of her recovery, and they
 “ were increased when we found she grew
 “ better and better, and was restored perfectly to reason. In the evening she sent
 “ to desire her husband and me to come to
 “ her. The unhappy man, animated by
 “ hope, obeyed her commands, and we
 “ entered her chamber. I was shocked at
 “ the alteration in her countenance, on
 “ which I thought I saw the hand of death
 “ imprinted. Her husband was also struck
 “ at the change, though he concealed his
 “ sentiments; and taking her hand in his,
 “ he seated himself by her. She wore a
 “ languid smile at our approach, but the
 “ lustre of her eyes was dimmed, and the
 “ vermilion of her cheek was faded. She
 “ stretched out her other hand to me,
 “ which I pressed to my lips; but that
 “ hand was cold, the dewy damp of death
 “ was

“ was on it; the king of terrors had
 “ claimed, and began to assert his domi-
 “ nion over her. The extreme pains, both
 “ of body and mind which she had suf-
 “ fered, had so far spent her, that when
 “ she began to speak, her voice was scarce
 “ audible.

‘ I have sent for you Mr. Harper, to
 ‘ take my leave of you,’ said she; ‘ and to
 ‘ assure you that in this hour, in which I
 ‘ believe I shall expire, my regard for you
 ‘ is as pure as ever. I am sensible I am
 ‘ departing. The long struggles I have
 ‘ had with death are fruitless, and I must
 ‘ resign—My love, my husband!—The
 ‘ Almighty separates us,—but we shall
 ‘ meet again where we cannot be sepa-
 ‘ rated.—I thank you for your kindness to
 ‘ me, and rejoice that I am called away
 ‘ before you, and am not to endure the
 ‘ misery of surviving you. But take care
 ‘ of this poor infant, whose birth has cost

‘me my life. Don’t resign yourself to grief or despair.’

‘I wont,’ replied he, with an appearance of the greatest composure.

‘I am going, death approaches me very fast—My sweet babes—I shall soon be with you. Farewell my good friend:’ and she turned her dying eyes on me, where I stood immersed in grief. ‘Do not lament for me. Take care of my husband: he loves you, and he will mind you.’

“She continued to speak, but her words were interrupted by the approaches of dissolution—Her eyes were fixed on the man she so truly loved. She was heard to say, ‘Farewell, my best beloved.’

“With a sigh her spirit fled, and returned to him that gave it. Her husband still sat with her cold hand fast in his, senseless, immovable; his eyes were still fixed on the lifeless remains of his once-adorable Adeline. He listened as if she was still speaking; nor could the
“cries

“cries of the servants rouse him from this
“lethargy of grief. He was frozen with
“sorrow, his powers all suspended, and
“his reason lost. We removed him from
“the room with difficulty.

‘I will go with you, now,’ said he; ‘but
‘she has something more to say to me,
‘and I must come again presently. She
‘told me she had something to tell me in
‘private.’

‘We indulged the transports of his af-
“fliction, which subsided upon having
“some blood taken from him, and he was
“convinced that she was dead. From
“the moment she expired, I saw not a tear
“come from his eye; the source of sorrow
“was dried up, the springs that supplied
“his eyes with that humidity were ex-
“hausted; but I had great reason to fear
“that his senses were impaired.

‘Well, Afgill, Adeline is dead at last—
‘but that is no reason why I may not see
‘her. I must, I will see her. Is there any

‘one so fit to be her mourner as I am?’
‘Could any one love her better? Can any
‘one grieve for her more?—But you see I
‘do not afflict myself. I am composed,
‘I am patient. It will be in vain to at-
‘tempt to hinder me, for I will see her.’

“ While he spoke, I observed a wild-
“ness in his eyes, and a peculiarity in his
“manner that shewed me the state of his
“mind. At that instant, one of his sisters,
“who had heard of the illness of the chil-
“dren, and who loved her brother’s wife
“with great sincerity, arrived in town.
“Her journey had been occasioned by her
“desire to assist and comfort her friend
“on this melancholy situation. But great
“and violent was her grief, on hearing the
“account of her death. I saw and ac-
“quainted her with her brother’s situa-
“tion. She had not time for lamentation
“before he approached her. She ran to
“him, threw her arms about him, and
“burst

“burst into tears, without being able to
“speak. He embraced her tenderly.

“You hear that my Adeline is dead.—

“It is true, Nancy—that good angel is
“gone before me to prepare my way to
“the regions of bliss. I am going to see
“her remains, and you shall go along with
“me.”

“Ah my dear brother do not go, it will
“renew your grief.”

“No—it can’t be renewed—besides I will
“go, for my cousin gave me leave, and
“Adeline left me in his care.”

“All remonstrances I found were in
“vain, and we ascended the chamber of
“death. Her face was as fair and as
“beautiful as ever I saw it. She seemed
“to be in a fine slumber, a pleasing smile
“sat on her countenance, and all her fea-
“tures were composed in the most beau-
“teous regularity. Mrs. Robins broke forth
“into loud lamentations at the sight of her
“friend’s remains; she embraced the life-
“less

“less Adeline, and called aloud upon her
“friend. With a tearless eye, the wretched
“Harper beheld his once-adored Adeline.
“He gazed on the corpse for some time :
“then turning to me,

“Was she not lovely !” said he, “Her
“charms were not greater at the moment
“she won my soul, than now robed in
“death. But her mind had more virtues
“than her person had beauties. Those
“eyes will never be reilluminated. I shall
“never hear the music of thy voice again.
“O Adeline, my wife ! I could now kiss
“those lips which have so often breathed
“forth the sweet accents of love to my en-
“raptured soul. But I will not violate
“the dead.”

“He returned to a chair which faced
“the bed where she lay, and never re-
“moved his eyes from the object of his
“dearest affections. He sighed frequently,
“and fearing he would be too much af-
“fected, I entreated him to quit this
“mourn-

“mournful scene; but he refused to leave the room. When the coffin was prepared for her, he then consented to retire; but he watched her all the time she remained in the house, nor would he be absent from her till she was carried to her grave. Still he preserved the same apparent composure.

‘You may think my behaviour strange and unbecoming,’ said he; ‘but now I cannot grieve: I have lost every thing that is dear to me, and I have nothing to lament now.’

“In vain he strove to hide from me the grief that preyed upon his soul. It affected every action of his life, and I never beheld any man possess such a dignity in his sorrow. But the more he concealed it, the more it affected him. For four months he stemmed the torrent of affliction, but it overpowered him at last. In that time he took no enjoyment of life. His imagination was tally

"tally engrossed by the most dreary re-
 "flections. All my endeavours to amuse
 "him were in vain. He gave himself up
 "to the indulgence of his sorrow, and he
 "wore away insensibly; yet I began to
 "form hopes of his getting the better of
 "this affliction, and conceived that time
 "would wear it away. He met me one
 "morning at breakfast. His eyes had no
 "longer that cloud of woe to blind them,
 "that so long had been visible in them.
 "He was then even chearful to what he
 "had been. I began to think in reality
 "that the lapse of time had deadened the
 "sense of his misfortunes. He had long
 "before settled all his worldly affairs, and
 "had spent a great deal of time in private
 "devotion. He employed that morning
 "in looking over his papers. He dined
 "with a seeming appetite. Heaven! said
 "I, has restored him to himself, to the
 "world, and to me. The thoughts of his
 "recovery gave me infinite pleasure. I had
 "never

“ never quitted him since the death of his
 “ wife, and every alteration was the more
 “ visible. We supped together, and still
 “ he seemed more chearful than before.
 “ When we were alone, he addressed me
 “ in such a manner, and with such words,
 “ as time cannot efface from my memory.

‘ My dear Afgill, you have been pleased
 ‘ to-day at the alteration that appeared in
 ‘ my behaviour, and began to think that
 ‘ I might in time forget my sorrows. I
 ‘ know you love me, and wished *that* to
 ‘ happen, but my chearfulness arose from
 ‘ another cause. The hour is near at
 ‘ hand when I shall shake off this cum-
 ‘ brous load of mortality, and join the
 ‘ blessed. Last night I saw my Adeline;
 ‘ I spoke to her. She is an angel of light.
 ‘ She told me she would come for me this
 ‘ night, and I received the tidings with
 ‘ transport. You know since the death
 ‘ of that dear partner of my heart, life has
 ‘ been a burden to me. I have not known
 ‘ the

' the benefit of rest, I have not slept three
 ' nights these four months. Ought not I
 ' to be rejoiced then at quitting this trou-
 ' blesome world? I leave it without re-
 ' gret, without pain. I am at the end of
 ' a pilgrimage that has thoroughly tired
 ' me, and which I think myself happy to
 ' have finished. My affairs here are all
 ' settled, and I have communicated the
 ' manner to you. I confide in you to see
 ' my intentions fulfilled, as you know them.
 ' Take care of that poor child, the only
 ' remains of this disastrous family. I have
 ' nothing else to recommend to you. I am
 ' sure that you will do every thing for the
 ' best. I have now only to thank you for
 ' your kindness and affection for me, and
 ' to take my last farewell of you'

" He rose to embrace me. I was equally
 " confounded at this address, and over-
 " whelmed with sorrow at the cause of it.

" You should not give way to this me-
 " lancholy, my dear friend, you will hurt
 " yourself."

" Ah,

‘ Ah, Afgill,’ said he, interrupting me, and shaking his head, ‘ there is more than imagination concerned in what I tell you—let me clasp you once more to my heart, ere I bid you farewell for ever.’

“ He embraced me with great affection.

‘ I shall never see you again in this world.’

‘ I hope,’ said I, interrupting him, ‘ that the enemy of mankind has not taken advantage of your despair, and armed your hand against your life. Take care; for that horrid deed would place you at an insuparable distance from your Adeline.

‘ No,’ replied he, ‘ heaven has given me strength to avoid all such temptations. No, my friend, my hour is come, and I am sensible of my departure. If that poor girl lives, but I believe she will not, take care of her. I die with pleasure, confiding in your regard for her.

Ah,

‘her. Be a father to her in my room.
 ‘Once more, farewell my friend.—Fare-
 ‘well for ever.’

“He pressed me to his bosom. I re-
 “turned his embrace. He took a can-
 “dle and retired, leaving me almost in-
 “sensible with grief. I endeavoured to
 “persuade myself that melancholy and
 “lowness of spirits had caused this alteration
 “in him, and in this hope I went to bed.
 “But sleep forsook me. I rose early in
 “the morning and expected his coming
 “down. The usual hour of his appear-
 “ing elapsed, and I trembled with appre-
 “hension.

‘Perhaps,’ said I in my way to his
 chamber, ‘he prophesied too truly.’

“His servant accompanied me. I opened
 “the door and heard no noise. I ap-
 “proached his bed, and drew his cur-
 “tains—He stirred not—I called him—
 “He answered not.—I took hold of his
 “hand—He was gone for ever!”

Here

Here the old gentleman closed his manuscript; he threw it out of his hand on the table, and wiped away the tears that trickled down his aged cheeks. I was affected at the sight. Mine accompanied his. They were the tears of sensibility; and hard must be the heart that is not moved by the distress of virtue.

“Young man,” said he, when he recovered himself, “your susceptibility of pity pleases me, while it is paying me a compliment. But that tenderness of disposition will be a very bad companion for you to travel through life with. Men in general will not honour it as I do, but turn it to their advantage. I never think of the deaths of my best, my dearest friends, that worthy man and his lovely wife, but I am as much affected as if it happened only yesterday; nor has the lapse of twenty years made any alteration in my sentiments. This was the cause why I asked you if you mourned
“the

“ the loss of a friend; for that I know, by
“ sad experience, is irreparable. You now
“ are acquainted with the cause of my
“ thinking so badly of the female sex. It
“ is because I have suffered so severely by
“ them. A long series of observation has
“ convinced me, that women, (with a very
“ few exceptions) from the highest to the
“ lowest, have all the same passions; but they
“ appear in different shapes. However I may
“ think of them now my passions have sub-
“ sided; while yours are all afloat, I shall
“ not gain you to my party. I will only add
“ this, for I suppose you are by this time tired
“ of the garrulity of age, that since Mr. Har-
“ per’s death, I have made no friendships,
“ and very few acquaintances. At my
“ time of life, men are not apt to form
“ many friendly connexions; and those who
“ court me, do it for the sake of interest,
“ because they are ignorant of my circum-
“ stances, and imagine me rich. In the
“ few months I have known you, I have
“ thought

“thought better of you than any man
“since my much-lamented friend. You
“have had a proof of it, and a greater than
“any other person has to boast. It is not
“very natural to suppose that an old man,
“like me, can be a very agreeable friend
“to one of your age. But you are at liberty
“to reject my offers of friendship, by re-
“fusing me your confidence; however, at
“any rate, the good wishes of an old man
“can do you no harm.”

I admired his frankness, and returned
him very sincere thanks for his good opi-
nion of me. His generous manner of open-
ing himself to me, the affection he had
conceived for me, the unreserved confi-
dence he reposed in me, all conspired to
make me place as great a trust in him. Be-
sides, as I was assured of the goodness both
of his heart and head, I thought his ad-
vice and friendship might stand me in
in the greatest stead. Perhaps you will
blame me, but I could not help it. His
kind

kind manner of treating me won my heart; and to give him a proof of my regard, I unveiled myself and my design to him. He looked at me very stedfastly for some time.

“A very extraordinary scheme, indeed,” said he, “and you think to succeed in it.”

“I hope so.”

“Indeed, young man, you have begun at the wrong end. However, I shall keep your secret, for I wish you well. But remember, I shan’t treat you with a bit more ceremony because you are a Lord.”

I prevailed with him to lend me his manuscript. Nay more, I obtained his leave to send you a copy of it, when I explained the nature of our connexion. He replied, you were an honest man for making me one. Adieu, Dear Thompson,

I am ever thine,

GEORGE BENSON.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

BELIEVE me a truer prophet than ever Nostradamus was, especially when the dear sex is at all concerned. Yet, when I reflect upon it, I am at a loss to conceive how I have arrived at the proficiency I have attain'd. Experience, dear experience, has done it all; and now I am able to encamp to as much advantage as my fair adversaries. Altering one word in an old song, shews my situation:

And if for the *fair* goes the battle to-day,
To-morrow the triumph is ours.

Now, Mr. George, without being as great a conjuror as Friar Bacon, or being possessed of his brazen head, you will, with a little penetration, be able to find out that I am just where I designed to be.

The daughter of the rural pharmacopoliſt has ſurrendered, and ſhe and I are upon the beſt terms imaginable. Nay, we have been ſo for ſome time paſt, and I was itching for an opportunity to acquaint you with it; but you have been ſo croſs as not to write to me, and I am obliged to break the ice myſelf, and inform you of it. You ſee I have been able to withſtand your grave remonſtrances, your ſerious admonitions, and your pious dehortations. Ah thou, in whoſe compoſition there is ſo little fleſh and blood, or at leaſt ſo little that is liable to temptation, as thou wouldeſt make us believe, you would do as I have done in the ſame ſituation; for as Mr. Bickerſtaff divinely ſings,

We all love a pretty girl under the roſe.

Ah, George, you would be a much finer fellow if you left off that ſtiff puritanical air, mingled with the gay, enjoyed life as

you should do, and were taught the secret of valuing yourself. But that you cannot know, till some kind-hearted female, in the fullness of her heart, acquaints you with your worth, and stamps you with sufficient marks for rendering you current with the fair sex for ever after. Those ideal marks of estimation are often of real service—For woman

Stoops to the forward and the bold.

I shall cease communicating these my instructions to you by letter, but enforce them by example in a short time. My business is finished; and this little affair, on which to be sure my heart was set, kept me here longer than was necessary. My pride as well as my inclination was concerned; for I was piqued at being jockeyed by the little filley, and flung out as I was. I tempted her, and she took the bait. Well, have I been guilty or not? I say, Not guilty; for if she knew

her duty, she would not have yielded to my temptations. If I had employed force, the sin would have been entirely on my side of the question; but in truth I had no notion of that—No, no, we proceeded upon very fair grounds. I told her I was ready if she was willing, and her inclinations met me half way. The path that had been chalked out for me I pursued; and her own vanity took me by the hand, and conducted me to the place I wished to be at. The novelty is over now, and I shall leave this part of the world very shortly. This I tell you to prevent your writing to me. Till I see thee, dear boy, credit me, I am yours, most truly,

JAMES HILGROVE.

LETTER

LORD STANTON. 29

LETTER XXXIV.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esquire.

HOW much am I indebted to you for the trouble you have taken in copying Mr. Algill's history for me! and how greatly am I obliged to him for the permission he gave you! I have indulged myself in the perusal of it. Twice have I read it. It must be confessed he has met extraordinary trials, uncommon troubles. But I join with him in thinking the loss of his friend his greatest misfortune. Every other evil in life may be in some sort remedied, in some measure repaired, except the death of a friend. But surely he should not think so hardly of the fair sex in general, because he has been ill treated by some particulars of them. One should imagine the very amiable picture he draws of the charming Adeline, had been sufficient to have prevented him

C 3

from

from railing at the sex, convinced as he must have been, that the faults of a few should not be imputed to the whole. But in every case where we feel ourselves, we argue from our prejudices and resentments. He confesses, his temper to have been soured by troubles and disappointments. His reason is also biaſſed and warped by them. He does not see now with the same eyes he did forty years ago; perhaps then you would have heard him defend them as zealously as he now wrongfully accuses them. I confess that he has been injured by the sex, and he has a right to condemn them by whom he has suffered. But, are all women guilty of the same crimes? We are always affected by the manner in which things represent themselves to us. That which is a heinous crime in the eyes of the party injured, may appear to another a venial transgression. Though I argue thus, I must acknowledge Mr. Aſgill has just
cause

cause of resentment against them; but he should not extend it too far. Do you blame me for thus contending for the honour of the sex, when I adore the most charming of them? Every syllable that derogates from them is an offence to me. Yet I am ashamed to take up arms in their defence, conscious of my own demerits. But influenced by the passion that now fills my heart, I dare attempt every thing. Ah, my worthy friend, you say you have loved. Don't credit the insinuations of your own heart. You scarcely felt the power of the revengeful god, who generally makes those that slight him suffer. Could you have given up the object of your love so tamely, if you had been inspired with the true passion? Ah, no. You would have known how to value a smile, a look, at too great a rate to part with them easily. But if you experience none of the delights, you are also a stranger to those torments which

attend that passion: and it is to be doubted whether the one can compensate for the other. I know your disposition, and am acquainted with your temper. *The pangs of despised love* will pierce your heart, and the tenderness of your nature will hardly sustain the mortifying repulse of scorn or aversion. Few are there that experience the delicacy of the passion, and those few are not always happy. Alas! I am an example of it. Oh, my friend, what a blessing is insensibility! How happy should I be if I could behold Charlotte's elegant form float by me, without being enraptured at the sight! if I could gaze on the charms of her face with the heedless eye of inattention! If I could hear her speak, without emotion, a thousand griefs would be unknown to me; I should escape a world of woe: but then I should be a stranger to those joys I feel when she smiles upon me; to those raptures that enchant me, when she talks

in

in the kind language of friendship to me. When I touch her, my heart would not bound with transport in my throbbing bosom: I should be lifeless, dull, inanimate. What can be determined? There are no pleasures like those arising from love, nor pains so bitter. 'Tis happy for human nature that it is so. The unchanging scene of pleasure would soon tire our sight; the constant draughts of delight would pall our appetites. The most luscious cates soonest cloy, and our knowledge of trouble, gives us the greatest relish for ease. The mixture so well suited to our natures, by sometimes feeding our hopes in the partial indulgence of our wishes, prevents them from expiring; and, by throwing difficulties in our way, inspires us with the greatest ardor to surmount them. But how shall I ever overcome those insuperable bars which obstruct my road to happiness? The sense of my guilt loads me with shame and confusion, and

I dread acquainting the adorable Charlotte with my passion, lest she should upbraid me with my perfidy, and abhor me. Though a repulse of that nature would almost end my days; though by continuing to love her, I am in hourly danger of meeting with it, yet I cannot forbear indulging the destructive passion; for it is only to me it can be destructive, and it is meet that I should be the victim of my own guilt. The fear of a rival has increased my love; the dread of losing Charlotte has augmented my regard for her. I can scarcely bear her out of my sight. My own reflections make me miserable, even in her presence. What will the censorious world say should she approve my passion? That taking advantage of her mother's partiality for our family, I have violated the trust reposed in us, and from her youth and inexperience, have availed myself of the opportunity of seducing her, and possessing myself of her

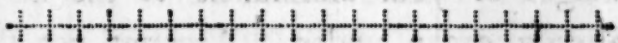
her fortune. This would bear the appearance of reason should she marry me. Should she marry me! what would become of the wretched Louisa? what would become of me? Are not my vows registered in heaven? I must forbear every claim to honour or honesty, should I forsake her, and every one be at liberty to call me villain. Would the pleasures Charlotte could afford me, recompense the loss of character and reputation?—No—Surely no. But can I forego my hopes of obtaining Charlotte?—'Tis madness, 'tis death to think on it—Oh it can never be!—I cannot quit her—and have no prospect of obtaining her. Thus my thoughts are maintaining the cause of virtue, honour, and Louisa; but my heart and my actions take the part of love and Charlotte. There is an eternal conflict in my breast, and I must fall a sacrifice to these contending passions. The tenderness of the best mother is alarmed for

the health of her unworthy son. I have not yet obtained a re-establishment of my former vigor. I am visibly altered, but no cause can be assigned for it. I insensibly decay, and am pressed in vain to declare my ailments. What can cure this disease of the mind? What medicine can heal the wounds of the heart? If I succeed in winning the affection of Charlotte, I am rendered wretched by my conscious breach of faith with Louisa. Miserable state!—where, by obtaining my wishes, I am rendered more unhappy. If justice and a sense of what is right, compel me to perform my vows to Louisa, I must be the slave of despair, in renouncing every thing that is dear to me, and abandoning every hope of her whom I prize above all other considerations. Besides, my heart would not dwell with Louisa, and we should both be wretched. These considerations disturb my peace, and destroy my quiet; they banish sleep

at night, nor does the day restore my rest. You have given me liberty of communicating all my griefs to you. You are kind enough to advise me in return. Extricate me from the evils that surround me. Why have we the knowledge of what is right, without the power of pursuing it? Or why are our passions so much stronger than our reason? Farewel, my dear friend, take warning by me: may you never be as unhappy as,

Your's sincerely,

J. THOMPSON.



LETTER XXXV.

To the same.

MY fears for your health and welfare have prevailed over every other consideration, and I cannot avoid writing to you. I am apprehensive that
you

you are tired with my melancholy letters, and that you detest me for my perfidy: but yet I love you, and cannot help enquiring after you. I have impatiently waited now above two months for your answer to my letter, and I cannot but forebode the most melancholy consequences from your silence, whether it proceeds from your not being able to write, or from a diminution of that friendship you have ever done me the honour to profess for me. Oh let me be held not unworthy of your esteem. Add not the weight of your unkindness to the ills I already groan under. Account not the weakness of my heart an intentional crime, and, taught to love you from my earliest days, let me not have the mortification to find that my hopes of a long continuance of your regard are all frustrated. Severe are the woes I endure. Great is the self-denial I practise. My heart and tongue are at continual variance, and you

are the only person I can reveal myself to. Shame ties up my tongue from speaking to Charlotte; I tremble at the thoughts of my falsehood, when I am constrained to tell Louisa that my love for her is still unimpaired. My situation too is most unhappily favourable for the indulgence of my passion. But it would encrease, if possibly it could admit of encrease, were it stimulated by difficulties, or roused by opposition. This an accident which happened lately informed me of, and which had nearly deprived me of that guard of discretion which I have hitherto preserved. Young Rogers, who, as I have already informed you, visits here frequently, and whose actions have unwarily informed me of the secret of his heart, a few days ago persuaded us to visit his family. His sister pressed us to go and see them, adding, that Mr. and Mrs. Rogers expected it, and as a further inducement, hinted, that a little variety, and change of air, even

even for so small a distance, might be of service to me, especially as their house was situated upon an eminence, and ours in a valley. As their invitation was extremely friendly and pressing, my mother resolved to comply with it, and we went to spend two or three days with our good neighbour. The pleasure our compliance gave the young gentleman, appeared plainly in his eyes; he was overjoyed, for it was more than he expected—Ah, little did he know that I could tell what passed in his breast, by the tumults I felt in my own. The day on which we had appointed to visit them came, and their carriage waited for us. Miss Rogers came in the coach with her brother, whose servant led an horse for him to ride back again.

“ Ah,” said I to myself, “ this jaunt
“ will put an end to all my hopes; these
“ girls will be companions, perhaps bed-
“ fellows. The brother has interested his

“ sister

“ sister in his behalf. She will have an opportunity of saying the most favourable things of him to Charlotte in those hours, when privacy and retirement open their hearts, and my rival will triumph, whilst I am forgotten.”

These were the thoughts which distracted my soul during our short journey, but they left a gloominess on my mind, that I could not get rid of, tho’ politeness commanded a different behaviour from that which I assumed.—It was all in vain that I attempted to shake it off: the attention which young Rogers paid to us all, and the spirits he was in, only served to increase my chagrin and trouble. It hung on me all the day, and made me wretched; I was even glad at that moment, that I could plead my illness as an excuse for my extraordinary reserve, which was so unbecoming and so remarkable. The night afforded me as little rest as the day. I painted in the strongest colours to my glowing imagination, the effects

fects which the conversation of Miss Rogers might have upon Charlotte. I sometimes attended to the suggestions of reason, which represented to me that I had no right to be uneasy; that I was making another as miserable as I was myself; that my unhappy passion, and the unjustifiable prejudice I had conceived against a worthy young man, would be the means of depriving me of the friendship and countenance of a genteel and agreeable family, who must detest and despise me when they came to know my engagements, and the treacherous part I was acting. But this calm was of a short duration: the strong tide of passion soon returned, and carried every thing away with it, but my love and my jealousy. I dosed: my dreams augmented the horrors of my situation.—Rogers was at Charlotte's feet.—He implored her pity.—His sister and her friend backed his petition, and seconded his request.—She could not withstand their repeated solicitations.—She smiled.

smiled upon him, and sunk into his arms. I started from the dreaded scene, and awoke to fresh misery.—I feared to sleep, lest the representations of my active fancy should exceed the horrors of my waking thoughts. Nature demanded rest, and sometimes my heavy eyelids closed in slumber.—Still the most hateful images tortured my soul, and my tormented imagination forbade repose. At length, the visions of the night fled at the appearance of day, the return of light gave a temporary relief to me; for it inspired me with the hopes of dissipating my sorrows, by diverting my attention to a number of objects. The sunbeams entered my chamber, and I rose with joy: for never had I more reason than that night to say, I was glad to see the return of morn. It was giving new life to me as well as to nature. I repaired to the garden, and there indulged my thoughts, which sought and courted solitude. I grew weary with walking, especially when the sun began to grow warm,

warm, and retired into an arbour, which was placed in a little shrubbery, and concealed from public view, but which nevertheless commanded part of the garden.— I had not been long seated here, before I heard the sound of voices; and among them, as I imagined, Charlotte's. Every power was suspended! and I sat in a state of uncertain expectation, while my heart was alarmed beyond measure. I feared, but knew not what: a dread hung over me that was unaccountable. At length they passed me unnoticed of them; and I had the mortification of seeing Charlotte attended by young Rogers and his sister. My blood congealed at the sight. My heart ceased to throb; every fear was realized; every apprehension was reduced to a certainty.

“ Oh wretched that I am,” for thus I exclaimed—“ the dreams of the night only foretold the transactions of the day. My good genius forewarned me of my approach—”

“proaching misery. But shall I be a witness to their transports! shall I see their fondness thus mutually expressed, without an endeavour to prevent it!—I cannot. But if she loves him, am not I a villain to interrupt their happiness!”

That reflection stopped me, though but for a little time, from pursuing them. Rage, love, despair assumed their former dominion over me; and my breast, the seat of anarchy and confusion, could scarce support *the wild uproar*. With trembling and agitated steps, I followed them; and soon overtook this happy party. Ah, how different from me! I could hardly forbear upbraiding Charlotte for even looking pleased at the man, whom I so much hated. But shall I tell you, that, for a time, my transports subsided in the presence of the charming maid.

Now sooth'd, the angels voice I hear,
And drink in love at either ear.

Now

Now stung, with wilder rapture gaze,
While our eyes meet with blended rays,
And kindling in the infectious flame,
I feel what words want pow'r to name.

My sudden appearance checked their happiness. I could read disappointment and chagrin in the lover's face. Ah, favoured youth, you have long enough enjoyed the smile of thy mistress, let me too in my turn be happy. I strolled about with them for the remainder of their walk, till we were summoned in to breakfast. Jealousy deprived me of every other pleasure I might have otherwise received in the company and conversation of Mr. Rogers's family. The many opportunities the young man might have of entertaining Charlotte with his passion, were ever present to my imagination; and how best to prevent them, took up my whole attention. In the evening, some neighbours having been invited for that purpose, there was a little dance.—I applied

plied to Charlotte for her hand, but young Rogers had engaged it.

“ Ah Charlotte, it was my right, and
“ I will not resign it.”

As there was an expression of passion in these words, she appeared amazed.

“ I could not think you would be an-
“ gry at my dancing with Mr. Roger’s : be-
“ sides it would be improper for us to dance
“ together, as we both live in the same house,
“ and I suppose Miss Rogers will expect
“ you to be her partner.”

There was no time to reply to this, as Miss Rogers came into the room where we were. But had not I been prevented that moment, I would have put an end to my restraint, and my heart had been eased of its load. Perhaps it was lucky that she intervened : at least I endeavour to consider it so. The night came, and what anguish did I endure in the familiarities, which the circumstance of her being his partner entitled him to take. My eyes were directed to
them

them only : I was heedless of every thing else. Not a smile, not a look escaped me : and every one pierced my heart. I strove a long time to appear as happy and well pleased as the rest of the company, but my opposing my griefs, but added to the force of them ; they overcame me, and I was obliged to retire from a scene so pregnant with woe to me. When I was by myself, it suggested itself to me, that in my absence they might indulge themselves more freely in the communication of their sentiments.

“ But I will hinder them,” did I exclaim, starting from the couch, on which I had thrown myself : “ I will not let them be “ happy, while I am in torment.”

I returned to the dancing room, and sat there. Ah, shall I tell you, that I thought she seemed pleased with his assiduities ; that she was delighted with the attention he paid her. As for her, she looked most amiable : Her sparkling eyes, animated with unusual vivacity, never were so brilliant,

liant, or so capable of inspiring love. I felt the force of their beams myself, and dreaded their influence over every other person. I am convinced that Rogers adores her: and fear lest he should captivate an heart, which I would lose my life to gain. That night I passed like the former, and no chearful vision rose to dispel the horrors that brooded on my mind. The next day was fixed for returning home; and I rejoiced in the thoughts of removing Charlotte from the habitation of my rival. They did not let us depart without many intreaties to stay longer; and both Mrs. Rogers and her daughter, finding we were determined to go, pressed my mother to grant Charlotte permission to remain a few days with them. She consented, and when she came down stairs informed me of it.

“What! will you leave Charlotte behind?”

“Why not child, she will be safe. And if it can give her pleasure, we ought to do it, for she receives but little with us.”

VOL. III.

D

“Oh

“Oh but madam, you should consider—”

The appearance of Mrs. Rogers tied up my tongue, and prevented my mean and unjustifiable suspicions of her safety in the family where she is: suspicions which my tormenting passion forms, and which I almost detest myself for harbouring. Mrs. Rogers, her daughter, and Charlotte, accompanied my mother and me in our way home. My grief was too strong to be suppressed, and I had no opportunity of venting it. I beheld her; as if for the last time; and my parting with her, had all the solemnity of an eternal separation. I threw myself on my bed in a fit of despair. Charlotte was gone from me to the presence of a man more deserving than myself, and therefore I hated him. He appeared to me in the most odious light; and, unoffending as he was, I would have sacrificed him to my resentment, had he been in my power. Convinced that he will make an impression upon her heart, and that what with his

sister's assistance, and his own assiduities, the little influence I had over her as a friend, will be no more; and he, the favoured lover, will revel in those charms denied to me; and for which my life would be too cheap a purchase. She has been absent from me four long days, and I am worse than ever. The longer she is with him, the less reserved she will be. Oh, good heaven! preserve my senses, for I am in danger sometimes of losing them. When the reserve is removed, familiarity will ensue. Well, he will touch her hand, perhaps press it.—'Tis the ambition of love, and must be gratified. Will it proceed no further?—May not he be emboldened by a sufferance to win her to listen to his amorous tale. Her gentle breast may heave with pity at the fictitious griefs he will relate. That sigh, that bursts from her generous heart is worth a kingdom. Perhaps, he will play with her. Youth and gaiety of heart authorize these sports. Ah,

he will take her in his arms, and press her panting bosom close to his ; the gentle pressure, shall animate desire, and make his heart throb with more violent transports. Perhaps he may kiss her.—Death ! I never kissed her. And shall he rob those lips of their balmy sweetness untasted by me ? Distraction !—I will tear her from his arms, or perish in the attempt.—Oh my friend, the joys of requited love, are not equal to the pangs of despair. Thus, I wretched employ myself ; thus pass away the hours in which I am divided from my Charlotte. Since I first knew her, I never suffered so long an absence, never endured the misery of thinking another happy in her sight, whilst I am lamenting her being separated from me. I endeavour to banish these dreadful reflections from my mind, by applying myself to my books ; but they alas are ineffectual ; and I cannot find the same relief from them, that the elegant, the noble Pliny did.—Ad unicum doloris livamen-

tum

tum studia confugio, quæ præstant, ut
adversa magis intelligam, sed patientius
feram.— i. e. *I fly to my studies, the only re-
medy for my grief, which, though they make
me feel adversity more poignantly, teach me
to bear it more patiently.* Adieu my friend.
Pardon my troubling you so often. But
you only are the confident of a passion
that embitters my life. May you never
know how soothing it is to an afflicted heart,
to vent its sorrows, or how the aching
breast is relieved by a participation of its
griefs. Once more farewell. Your's

HENRY THOMPSON.



L E T T E R. XXXVI.

To Mr. THOMPSON.

FORGIVE me, dear Thompson, for-
give the silence with which I have
treated your letters. I hold myself in-
excusable, because I know I am culpable.

But your good-nature will find some excuse for me, when I can find none for myself. I confess my cruelty in alarming your apprehensions for my safety and welfare, by my neglect of your letters. I do not deserve that you should think of me with either tenderness or friendship; but I know your humanity, and such is the state of our frail natures, that we offend, without remorse, those whom we know will forgive us, but act otherwise with those who resent our slights. But you will perhaps allow me to say something in my own behalf, when I tell you that Hillgrove has been these three months in town, and that I have been always with him. You know him, and his attachment to pleasures in this city, where such variety is eternally offering. My silence will tell you that, seduced by his example, I have not been able to withstand the temptations he threw in my way. And that since I wrote to you before,

fore, your friend is much altered; you will say, perhaps not without justice, that it is for the worse.

When shall I begin to tell you how I have passed my time; or how shall I complete my story? I dread your honest reproofs, for I know myself guilty, though pleasant as yet have been the paths I have trod. Hillgrove has a generous heart, and a noble mind. To a very handsome person, and an agreeable face, he adds a spirit and vivacity seldom met with: But it is not such as I have seen render a man ridiculous, or shunned by the rest of the world. No, his enables him to mingle with every set of people, enter into their sentiments, imbibe their spirit, and be pleasing while he remains among them. He is a perfect chameleon, I assure you, and he receives the tinct he wears for the hour from the company he is in. Among the women chiefly his great delight is. He has met so many that have been fa-

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vourable to him, that he thinks they will be all so. Thus making himself perfectly easy in that supposition, he succeeds a great deal better than another man would, who was more anxious about the matter. He treated my ignorance of the fair sex in a very cavalier manner, when he arrived in town, and that I might profit by his example, took me by the hand, to prove what he advanced was the truth. We have plunged into the tide of pleasure, and taken large draughts from the intoxicating cup which she held out to us. I now find that all those tales he formerly told me, and which I always treated as the children of his own imagination, are perfectly true; and that the sweet sex are just what he represented them. Thus mingling with the world, taking it as it goes, I must necessarily adopt their manners, and be swayed by their customs. No longer the grave contemplative fellow

low you made and left me; I have the air of a man of the world, and more knowledge from practice, than all the books I ever read have in theory. However, because I thus wish to taste the sweets of life, hold me not cheap, as an abandoned or a dissolute fellow. It may not be amiss to have known these things, and an experience of evil often prevents the commission of it.

A young fellow with a good figure, and a plentiful fortune, may do every thing in this town; and the Grand Seignior, and his Circassian beauties, cannot compare with our pretty countrywomen. The languid ardors he excites, are the effects of compulsion; but we inspire, and gratify desire. Ignorant of the ways of the world as I am, yet I have not been without my achievements. A porter put a billet into my hand, and whilst I was admiring the superscription of it, got off un-

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questioned. It was addressed in the monitory verse of Dryden:

Be secret and discreet—Love's fairy favours
Are lost when not conceal'd.

This bespoke a mystery, and I hastily burst open the paper; it contained these words:—

“ Titania, queen of the fairies, to the most
“ charming of the sons of men—

“ Love spares not immortality—And I
“ have felt his shafts. That mortals have
“ been admitted to our embraces, is authorized by many instances. That height
“ of honour is reserved for you. I shall
“ be at the masquerade to-morrow night
“ in my proper dress. If you dare encounter me, I shall meet you half way.
“ But I know that secrecy alone can ensure you a fairy's affection. Perhaps
“ before we part I may condescend to
“ be a mortal.”

“ A

"A fair challenge," said Hillgrove, to whom I communicated this billet. "You must answer it by all the laws of honour."

"It is my design, I promise you."

It is not to be supposed I failed to meet my fair antagonist. To encounter the queen of the fairies, it was necessary that I should put on proper apparel. I was dressed like a forrester. Green was the close habit which fitted my body. My spear glittered in my hand, and my bugle horn hung from my shoulders. But till her majesty appeared, I concealed myself in a domino. She did not enter the room till late, and her appearance attracted the eyes of the whole motley company. Her robe was of a light blue, embroidered with silver stars and flowers. Her hair was bound up spirally, and a string of diamonds appeared to confine it, which terminated in a large crescent. I cannot really describe the other parts of her dress,

which bespoke an elegant fancy, and great richness. I must not however forget her wand, nor to tell you that her shape was faultless, and her air noble. I attended her for some time in my domino, and listened to the answers she gave the crowd that thronged about her: for coming into the room alone, she excited every body's curiosity, and was attacked on all sides. I call her alone, as she had only a person in the habit of an attendant fairy with her. She repulsed every body that came near her, and her eye was in quest of something, she knew not what. It was time to relieve her from her anxiety; and slipping out to the place where my servant waited, I threw off my domino, and entered as the hunter. I approached her, and whether she knew my person or no in that disguise, I know not, but she started as I came near her.

"I have received a sore wound," said I, "and the queen of the fairies can alone cure me."

"Is

"Is it visible?"

"No; and that makes it more dangerous."

"When did you receive it?"

"Yesterday at noon."

"Ha, Forrester, are you come?"—

"Yes; and you must lay aside your pretensions to fairy knowledge, for I have attended your person in disguise ever since you appeared, while your eye was seeking me in vain. You must drop your divinity, and break your wand; for I can be as secret to a fair mortal as the queen of the fairies."

"You rob me of my divinity too soon; consider, I shall be less troublesome to you in this assumed character, than when I sink into a meer woman."

By this time we had got away from the company, and found ourselves almost alone. Here we entered into conversation, and I prevailed on her to shew me her face, which would not have disgraced the reality

reality of the character she assumed. It was really charming. An explanation soon ensued; and eager to be blessed, we retired from the crowd, which prevented our joy and heightened expectation. Do not imagine that I pass my time in seducing innocence, or violating the nuptial bed—no such thing. This was the mistress of a nobleman, who kept her more for the vanity of having so fine a woman in his power, than for any other gratification. She thought herself at liberty to please her fancy, and I happened to be the happy man. Well, Thompson, and where's the harm of all this?—Your gravity will be displeased with it, and your passion will make you look on me as a very bad fellow. But though I indulge and gratify the desires so natural and consequent to youth; I trust I do not forget the dictates of honour, or fail to pay a due respect to virtue. Apgill, for whose opinions I have a great regard,
some-

sometimes scolds me, and sometimes laughs at me, telling me I am but an half-form'd rake, and lie with a very bad grace; thus, says he, people eat olives, who don't like them, because it is the fashion to do so, but they can't help making faces at them, for all that, sometimes. He prophesies that I shall not be a rake of any long duration; nay, he has so good an opinion of me, that he associated me in a design which we very happily effected of rescuing innocence from the jaws of seduction and ruin. The object was the daughter of Captain Bailey, for whom Sir Thomas Mitcombe had long spread his artful snares. Asgill, her good genius, kept a watchful eye over him, let him indulge his hopes till the moment he was ready to put his schemes in execution, and then snatched the prey from him. This has been effected without noise, and the girl is sensible who her benefactors were. I hope this good action will atone for a thou-

thousand idle ones. But plunged as I am in this sea of dissipation, I still feel for your sufferings; have still an heart susceptible of friendship, of pity, of love. Though I do not experience these woes myself, yet your account of the torments that distract you make me fear the influence of that dreadful passion. If by comparing my former situation with yours at present, I may judge of the greatness of my regard for Miss Mitcombe, you must certainly be right in asserting, that my passion was not so violent as yours, and that if it had I should have been equally incapable of making such a sacrifice as I did. But now it is all over; and what rendered it then a matter of no great difficulty with me, was the character that had been given me of her fondness for admiration, and the manner in which she treated her lovers. Perhaps Charlotte may have a mixture of coquetry in her disposition: and if she has, to a
man.

LORD STANTON. 65

man of your temper and disposition, I know no greater curse that could befall you. Sure it should be enough to cure your unavailing passion, and restore you to reason, to yourself, and to your friends. May this soon happen: so wishes he who is the sincerest of them, and truly yours,

GEORGE BENSON.



LETTER XXXVII.

TO WILLIAM ROGERS, Esq.

SO you are truly and honestly in love, Will.—Oh dear! oh dear! that men will be so simple—What should I have done if I had been in love? Even nothing—but by pretending to be so I can do every thing. And where is the penetrating eye that can pierce through my dissimulation, whilst I preserve the appearance of the most respectful, the most assiduous lover that ever was celebrated in
the

the annals of romance? Nay, I have a manifest advantage over those, who are unfortunate or foolish enough to entertain that ridiculous passion. So certain it is that the stander-by sees more of the game than those who play. While others are biassed by prejudice, swayed by partialty, or alarmed with apprehensions, I am cool, sedate, and active to seize every opportunity that offers wherein I may be serviceable to myself. I admire your description of your mistress, and really in some places it is very poetical. If she had a sight of it she could not do less in honour than surrender herself up to a man who thinks so favourably, and speaks so finely of her: and like me you have a rival too, though not a professed one. Take care, he may do you the more mischief. As for me, I am at open war with my adversaries, and as far as all hostile methods of circumventing each other may carry us—no farther—I confess, it would be disagreeable to me

to have an occasion of putting my personal prowess to the proof: but rather than fail in my designs, I would not hesitate to crown my affection, with so striking a mark of my zeal—As for rivals I have no great fear of them. Sir Christopher Blackford is just returned from his travels, in which he has laid out a great deal of money to very little purpose: and all the advantage that I perceive he has derived from seeing foreign countries, is not being able to endure his own; a circumstance that in my opinion does very little honour to his judgement: however, he exhibits in his manner of paying his addresses to Miss Conyers, a very pretty epitome of modern travellers. You would hardly think that he unites to the vivacity of the French, the jealousy of the Italian, and the stupidity of the Hollander. His pretensions to taste shew he has none at all: and to a man that can read and study this walking map, he is extremely entertaining.

Perhaps

Perhaps you may imagine I delight in abusing him, because he is my rival. It really is not : but I only relate the truth. He is an abridgement of the geography of the continent ; not a town, village, or rivulet that has been in the least noticed, that he is not personally acquainted with. The cities and rivers, he knows every street in the one, and every island in the other. I cannot help saying that he frequently misplaces them, but such a removal is nothing to a man of his fertile genius : nor do I ever reprehend him, but let him indulge himself as much as he pleases : the more luxuriant he is, the less able will he be to stand the nipping frost of reproof. The next to him is Mr. Mannersley, a real Englishman, and to complete the character, a real lover : most religiously attached to the manners of his own country, he believes them to be the quintessence of perfection, and that there are no such people, or such customs in the world as our own.

While

While Sir Christopher sips claret, Mannersley swills port; and applauding himself for encouraging the trade of his country, he reproaches the Baronet for taking delight in the produce of our enemies. Mannersley hates a Frenchman, as naturally and instinctively as the elephant does the rhinoceros; and I believe he secretly wishes himself among those American tribes who roast and eat their prisoners. As Mannersley, notwithstanding his national prejudices, which are by no means blameable, only as they are carried to excess, is generally too many for the Baronet; I take his part, and turn the scale in his favour; but that does not happen often, for Mannersley is too obstinate to give up the dispute upon every occasion. He has also another advantage over Sir Christopher; which is, that his estate is totally unincumbered, and a very good one: and that by the bye, is a point where I fail myself; and I cannot look upon a man with a favourable eye, who

beats

beats me in so material a circumstance. I told you before, that Mannersley is really and truly in love with Miss Conyers. I confess she is a most amiable, a very fine woman; and I myself should be very fond of her, were she to be had on any other terms than marriage: but that is not to be thought of, for I believe she is truly virtuous; and were she not, the Hesperian fruit was never more strictly guarded.—Mannersley has not much of the amiable or engaging in his composition, but a great deal of the honest: and to tell you the truth, I believe him more sincere than either the Baronet or myself. He does not want natural unimproved sense, but he seldom applies it properly: he is open, undesigning, and generous, and makes love with his acres; while poor Sir Christopher and I, are, and must be content to shew our persons to advantage, and employ all our arts of address, to counterpoise the heavy scale. To say the truth, Miss Conyers herself carries

ries matters with a very even hand, and gives none of us encouragement ; and really has told us plainly, she does not chuse any of us : but a little partiality to ourselves, and our own dear qualifications, makes us think that we may overcome this reserve, and carry off this golden fleece. Were that to be done, I should be a very fine fellow, Rogers, I assure thee ; for she is a most noble fortune, and worth all the pains I take about her. Thou knowest my disposition, and thou wilt judge of the consequence she is to me, by the trouble I am at to get at her, when I tell thee I have renounced my favourite pursuits. I have not thrown a die ever since I proposed for her. I have played nothing but guinea-whist, and that only to oblige her aunt ; protesting that I never did it before. I frequent church, and avoid taverns. In short, nothing that can offend the most scrupulous, or alarm the most censorious, can be found in my conduct. If this self-denial won't win

win her, hypocrisy must be unsuccessful; that is all I know of it. But though this lady gives me no hopes herself; I see something arising in another quarter, that may be the star of happiness, and gild my future days with joy: and this is nothing more than the good opinion I have inspired lady Grisby with. The deference I have ever payed her, the pains I have taken to make her, if possible, think better of herself than she does at present; the constant adherence to every thing she says in her political disputes, for she is eternally adjusting the interest of the nation, and always taking her part, have made her a warm advocate for me. Her husband, Sir Marmaduke, who is in the house, is her constant opponent; and she has no other way of overcoming him, but flying to my assistance; indeed my alliance is very necessary for her, and I never refuse lending her my aid; the only subsidy I require, is her interest with her fair ward. Sir Marmaduke,
her

her husband, is one of the wrong side of the question; but wrapped in the conscious applause of his own heart, he thinks he is doing his country the most important services, and does not doubt to have statues and medals consecrated to his name in future times. However, poor Sir Marmaduke does not consider that his abilities do not correspond with his intentions, and that he will blunder on to eternity, without reaping either profit or fame from his endeavours. If he is a silent patriot in the senate, he is a very noisy one at home. His labours for the benefit of the commonwealth, are the eternal theme of his discourse; and in this he is generally supported by some of his friends, whose inclinations lean the same way; but whose fortunes not being so affluent as his, their nonsense is not so much attended to. To this torrent of patriotism, heightened by port, lady Grigby, with a truly independent spirit, constantly opposes herself. Whether it

may arise from that supreme delight which most women have in contradicting their husbands, I know not; but she is stedfast and resolute in her opposition. Poor Mannerley takes the side of Sir Marmaduke; whilst Sir Christopher and Harry are under lady Grigsby's banners. Her ladyship applies to me, and I never fail to let her triumph.

"There Sir Marmaduke, you hear what my lord says, and sure you must allow his lordship to be a judge."

"Aye, Aye," replies the Baronet, "we all hear, my lady, what my lord says; it may be from principle perhaps; but I cannot think so badly of his lordship, to imagine these are his real sentiments."

"Oh Sir Marmaduke," rejoins his invincible antagonist, "I am sorry to find you fly to such subterfuges: it shews how little able you are to support your arguments; you had better drop your present notions, and let me instruct you, in what would
2 "make

“make you more respectable in the world,
“and lead to new honours.”

“Zounds! my lady, you are enough to
“make a man mad—I have told you once
“before, that I never will be a courtier,
“or betray my country, nor never be a
“slave, for all the lords and all the mi-
“nisters in the world; nor would I take
“a place or pension if I was starving;
“nor would I be a lord if they were to
“ask me.”

“Oh Sir Marmaduke, if you grow
“scurrilous, I must leave you. It is a
“great pity you can’t argue with temper.
“But it is not every body that has that
“happiness. My Lord, I hope you will
“forgive Sir Marmaduke’s intemperate
“zeal, he means no harm. Your servant
“gentlemen.”

“Oh my lady, do not leave us yet.”

“I must indeed, for Sir Marmaduke
“would abuse me presently else.”

“ Let her go,” let her go, says the Baronet, when he thinks she is out of hearing ;
“ its enough to be plagued with the interest
“ of the nation all day abroad, not to have
“ a repetition of it at home. Come, here’s
“ the wooden walls of England. All parties may drink that toast. But my lord,
“ you should not take lady Grigsby’s part
“ so constantly. I know you do not always think as you say.”

“ Oh but allowing that, you would not
“ have me refuse to give my opinion, when
“ her ladyship asks me ; and I cannot think
“ of contradicting your lady.”

“ That is the plague on it. Your compliance to her, is the cause of eternal
“ brawls at home. While you take her
“ part, she will never be quiet ; but if she
“ had not you to help her, we soon should
“ quiet her.”

Sir Christopher and I generally leave them soon, and retire to the tea-table, where I have frequent opportunities of urging my
suit,

suit, and gratifying lady Grigsby's vanity, by assuring her, that her husband stands no chance in a debate with her. Thus do I go on, Rogers; thus am I obliged to humiliate my haughty spirit, to retrieve my fortune if possible, and restore myself to the inheritance of my ancestors. I, their unhappy descendant, am suffering the punishment due to their misdeeds, as well as my own; and must endeavour, however painful the task, to support my title and rank; the present embarrassed state of my affairs destroys all the spirited ideas a youthful imagination had conceived and entertained with pleasure. But I am in such a train now that hopes once more revive, and I shall be myself again. It would be a dreadful mortification to me, to lose the fruit of my dissimulation, and be disappointed in the prospect of establishing myself. I believe Miss Conyers has a better opinion of me than the rest of her admirers; and I shall do every thing in my power to en-

crease it. Lady Grigsby, is my great friend, and suffers me to entertain the object of my wishes alone, whenever I please; a liberty that is denied to the other competitors. All that astonishes me, is, that I have not more rivals, and more dangerous ones than have yet appeared. Fare thee well Rogers; fail not to communicate to me in return, how Charlotte receives thy addresses, and whether thou art likely to succeed in the wishes of thy heart. I must not love, but when wealth entitles the fair one to my adoration. Farewell, old acquaintance, I do not forget the happy times we spent together at college: we shall renew them, when I can call Miss Conyers mine.—Once more adieu, and believe me your sincere friend.

AVERSTON.

L E T.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO MISS ATKINS.

YOU envy my happiness in revisiting this metropolis, Caroline. Ah my sweet friend, be assured, that I had rather be eternally buried in the country, than subjected to the many mortifications that continually thwart me in this place. Ah were you to know of how little value all the boasted joys of this city are, and what trifling satisfaction they afford, you would not lament your being debarred from visiting London; you would rejoice at being situated in a place, that preserves you from continual tumults and sollicitations, to me most disagreeable. I long for the solitude and privacy you despise, and sigh for the retirement, you value so little. When you have been tormented as I am by the presence of crouds you detest, where you are forced to act under an everlasting constraint;

straint; where you see nobody, who speaks or acts with sincerity, you would, like me, hate the scene where every thing is disguised. Yes Caroline, I languish for the unreserved communication of thoughts, for our morning employments, our evening rambles. The return of the spring has inspired me with a fresh desire, to visit again the beauties of the sweet place I left behind me. Yet even then, perhaps, I should not be eased of the disagreeable interruptions I suffer now: though perhaps in the country, we might find a means of eluding their search, and hide ourselves from the disturbers of my peace. 'Tis the wish of every woman to have admirers; it is the compliment due to their perfections, and which they are not easy without, lest they should fancy themselves overlooked and despised by the world, because they had not attractions sufficient to engage lovers. Then you will say I am happy, for I have had many; but none that have been able

to

to make me sigh for them. Even now they throng about me; at the playhouse, at the church they follow me without ceasing, and I am obliged to put a guard on all my words and actions, lest I should deviate, even in the smallest particular, from that equal behaviour I bear to them all, endeavouring not to offend any, but treat them all with civility, though I have already delivered my opinion, that I cannot approve of either of them. They flatter themselves that they shall overcome my aversion by their unwearied assiduity, and oblige me, in my own defence, to take one of them. No town blockaded by an enemy is more closely beset; no mistress of an eastern tyrant more narrowly watched than I am: but they are mistaken in me. I have as much patience as they have: and if a spirit of resentment can find room in my breast, I should certainly be allowed to excite it; for they wish to make me break my word, and

marry one of them, after I have declared I did not like them; and then if they had me in their power, would revenge the slight I had formerly put upon them. Nor can all this attention arise from the great regard they have for my person. No, Caroline, no.—If any body had the fortune which I shall be soon entitled to, no matter how deformed, that would be the shrine to which their addresses would be paid. I am heartily sick of grandeur and quality, for Lady Grigsby is as fond of it as ever Mrs. Heidelberg was. Mr. Mannersley has followed me to town: and really I have a better opinion of his sincerity than of either of my other admirers, as they stile themselves, But then his manners are disagreeable, and I don't like him. Sir Christopher Blackford is too fond of himself, and while he is addressing me, takes that opportunity of displaying his own fine parts. I cannot think him a very sensible man, though Sir Marmaduke

maduke Grigsby, my uncle, says he must be a clever man who has seen so much of the world.—It may be so—but I cannot see that either his head or his heart are improved by his travels; and, instead of an elegance of taste, or simplicity of manners, he is the poor affected copy of every nation he has seen. Lord Averston,—yes, Caroline, I may be a Lady if I please, is the man who seems nearest to the proposed point. He treats me with the most profound respect, he always behaves towards me with the greatest politeness and delicacy.—Ever attentive to what I say, he prevents and gratifies my wishes before I have well time to form them. A man of extreme good sense, which has been improved by a visit to the continent, and the exact reverse of Sir Christopher, he strictly adheres to the manners of his own country. “Well, you say, Matilda, is not this an unexceptionable character?” Yes, so far it is,

and I will add also, what my aunt, a great friend of his, advances on his behalf upon all occasions; that since he paid his addresses to me, he has forsaken all those little fashionable vices which young men of quality are addicted to. In short, that he has devoted himself entirely to me. There is no resisting this, is there Caroline? And yet I must honestly confess to you that I do not like him. He has too much art I fear to be sincere. I had rather see more warmth and less politeness. He is as civil to every body else, though not so particular as to me. Now I hear you exclaim in a passion, "This girl is never to be satisfied. — I'll lay my life you're jealous of him." Not so, my dear Caroline, jealousy implies affection, and Lord Averston has not gained mine. There is something in his behaviour which does not please me, and yet I cannot explain it to you, but it wants that tenderness which I wish to see in a lover.

lover. These are my greatest torments. I do not want to marry, for I can behold them all with indifference. Lord Averston has more of my esteem, but none of my regard; I may admire his bright and shining qualifications, but I cannot love him. It seems by their pressing me in this manner, that it is necessary I should fix upon somebody to make myself happy. My aunt espouses the cause of Lord Averston, my uncle of Mr. Mannersley, while Sir Christopher, depending on his own merits, stands unsupported and alone. He does not prosper more than either of them, for I am equally indifferent to them all. My paper will scarce allow me to assure you I shall write to you soon again,

And am your sincere friend,

MATILDA CONYERS.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

To the same.

WHEN I promised to write to you soon again, my good Caroline, I had it only in my head to desire you to remember your promise about my little family in the country, and look among my pensioners sometimes, to see if they follow the plan laid down for them; to request you to see that Hewetson does not neglect to pay them their weekly stipend; for though he is a man strictly honest, he has not the most feeling heart, and has often represented to me that these people can get bread for themselves, and that I only encourage them in idleness. I knew very well from what motives these suggestions proceeded; and ere my bounty reached them, I made myself acquainted with the dispositions of the people, their families

families and their wants. Though I can shew nothing valuable in the eye of the world for the sums I spend thus, yet I please myself by indulging my dispositions, and have more pride in my little cherry-cheeked favourites familiarity with me, than in hearing the murmur of applause and envy that would attend the blaze of jewels, unnumbered and inestimable on a birth-night, did I chuse to dress myself in all such finery. I encourage industry.—I relieve the people that cannot help themselves—And I prefer that to heaping up money, or purchasing jewels. The man that has me, will have fortune enough with me; and I should be sorry to be united to one who would think I did amiss in bestowing such trifles on the indigent. These children are my family, they are my relations—For I, alas! never knew the benefit of a mother's counsel, never experienced the affection of a father. Mr. D'Aubigny, it must be

con-

confessed, has ever acted as a kind and affectionate friend, and ever supplied that loss to me. His care provided me with proper teachers in my infancy; he watched my youth, and made me what I am. To his instructions I am indebted for all my knowledge, and to his advice I owe every thing. Whilst I loved him as a friend, I feared to offend him as a parent; and many, many times have I lamented with tears, the quarrel he had with my aunt, in which Sir Marmaduke supported her, and which banished him from this house. Though ever kind and indulgent to me, the old gentleman has not all the patience that he should have to support my aunt's oddities. I see him frequently, and go from his presence wiser and better every time. My aunt can't bear the mention of his name, so great is her aversion to him; but I find he has greater authority over me than Sir Marmaduke, and that he alone has the disposal of me
till

till five and twenty, if he chuses to exert his power. However, his assurances of his regard for my welfare have reconciled me a little to his absence from this house. Whenever any thing happens, I ever advise with him, and implicitly follow his directions. Soon after the quarrel, which made him abandon Sir Marmaduke's house, he addressed me one day thus:

“Be assured, Matilda, that though I
 “may not see you so often as I used to
 “do, yet your welfare is still dearer to
 “me than my own. The partiality of
 “your father has given me an exclusive
 “right of bestowing you in marriage.
 “Rely on it, I will never force your in-
 “clinations, nor will I ever refuse my con-
 “sent to make you happy, when you can
 “fix your affections on a man worthy of
 “you. Your fortune will draw many
 “admirers about you, and every art will
 “be tried to ensnare your young and un-
 “ex-

“experienced heart; but come and open
“yourself to me, and you shall ever find
“the friend you wish for in me. But if
“you solicit me for my consent, and afterwards refuse to marry the man you
“have desired, I shall conclude you fickle
“and worthless, and from that hour shall
“reign all my power into the hands of
“your uncle, who will not then have a
“check upon him, or be obliged to treat
“you with the same complacency he does
“now.”

Ah Caroline, I am too sensible of the benefits that arise from the good man's care of me to forfeit them wantonly, and I would not lose his friendship, that is disinterested and pure; but I imagine both my uncle and aunt have designs which I cannot unravel at present.

“Really Matilda,” said my aunt, as we were alone the other morning, “I cannot
“conceive how you can be so blind to
“your own interest, as to reject Lord
“Averston,

"Averston. There is many a girl would
"leap at such an offer."

"I should be very happy, Madam, if
"he would apply to them, and let me
"indulge my present desire to live single."

"Upon my word, Matilda, I ought to
"be chagrined at your want of confi-
"dence in me, and desire of deceiving me
"at the same time. You wish to live
"single! would any girl in the world,
"but yourself, say so, when addressed
"by a man of his lordship's interest;
"his personal qualifications are univer-
"sally approved, and his good sense is
"unquestionable. Consider, my dear niece,
"he is a young nobleman of good fa-
"mily, who has the services of his an-
"cestors to plead in his behalf to enti-
"tle him to ask further honours from
"royalty. I should not despair of seeing
"you a dutchess in a very short time.
"Once more let me request you to confi-
"der,

“der, before you so rashly reject an offer
“you may never have again.”

“Indeed my Lady I have considered
“about it, and I cannot embrace it.”

“Why, Matilda, will you treat me
“with this reserve? I should think my
“care and attention to you in your days
“of infancy, and my never-ceasing at-
“tention for you, should induce you to
“make me your confidant, and acquaint
“me with the wishes of your heart. You
“are sensible, my dear child, there can
“be nobody more willing and desirous of
“indulging them, or making you happy
“than I am.”

“Indeed, Madam, you know as much
“of my heart as any body else does. I
“have no secrets to communicate, very
“few wishes to indulge, and never saw
“the man yet whom I would desire to
“see again.”

“But how can you treat a man of
“Lord Averston’s sincerity with such cool-
“ness?”

“ nefs? You know he doats on you, he
 “ is never happy but in your presence,
 “ he loves you with an ardor very un-
 “ common in the youth of this age; and
 “ you have no pity for him. So true it
 “ is, that we are seldom judges of those
 “ who love us best.”

I had no time to make any reply to this preconcerted harangue, had I been inclined to do it, for the object of her praises appeared. Perhaps it had been designed (perhaps not) that he should come and take his own part after my aunt had paved the way for him. However, she took an occasion to retire after a little time, and left us alone. His Lordship entertained me at first with the news of the town, and from one topic to another he insensibly slid into the old subject.—His passion and my cruelty. I justified myself, but entreated him to forbear talking of the only thing in the world which I did not wish to hear him
 speak

Speak of. His reply was respectful and polite; but still he retained the theme his heart, he said, was full of. He had still proceeded, had not Sir Christopher Blackford appeared, and interrupted him. To tell the truth, I never was so well pleased to see the Baronet's face as at that moment, for I cannot bear to be upbraided for want of humanity, when my heart is so susceptible of the tenderest sensations. The rest of that day passed without any particular application to me. The next day but one, my aunt went out, and left me at home, as I complained of a pain in my head. Sir Marmaduke took the opportunity of his wife's absence to introduce Mr. Mannersley to me, in a more particular manner than ever; he assured me of his esteem, and that, from his principles, he would make me a good husband, and deserve my affection; he said many more things in his praise, which I did not pay all the deference and attention

tention to in the world. Mr. Mannersley himself seconded this address in his favour, and my uncle left us as soon as he began to speak, thinking it unnecessary to be a witness to our conversation.

"I am obliged to your worthy uncle, Miss," said he, "for the good opinion he has of me, and I hope you won't think the worse of me for his recommendation. I love you dearly, I do by—" and he swore a tremendous oath—"and I'll prove it too, for I'll settle your own estate, and mine along with it, on you, for I never desire to be my own master whilst I can be governed by you."

"You would think otherwise when we had been married for some time."

"No, that I shan't," replied he, "I am not a man that changes and chops about, from one side to t'other. I tell you once more I love you, and I shall never
" be

"be happy without you, if I was to live
"a thousand years."

"I am very much obliged to you for
"thinking well of me, Sir; but really I
"have not turned my thoughts to ma-
"trimony yet."

"Well, but do now, and I'll either
"marry you as soon as things can be got
"ready, or I'll stay seven years for you
"but I'll have you."

"I really wish I could make you happy
"by any other means than those you
"mentioned; or that you would turn your
"thoughts to some more worthy wo-
"man."

"I can't; that is impossible."

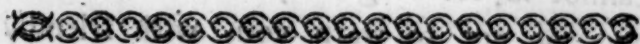
"I must request you not to waste your
"time then, in soliciting me to no pur-
"pose. I assure you, Sir, I can esteem
"you as a friend; but I will not deceive
"you, I cannot admit you as the person
"I design for my husband."

"Why

"Why that's honest," said he, "and
"I like you and thank you for it, its
"better than being kept dangling. How-
"ever, perhaps you may change your
"mind."

Lady Grigby's coach stopped at the
door, and prevented our further conver-
sation. Thus am I tormented. Wou'd I
could see the man who would relieve me
from these plagues! Adieu my dear friend,
tell me how all your family are, I am
greatly concerned in their welfare. Once
more farewell,

MATILDA CONYERS.



L E T T E R. XL.

To GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

IF I can presume upon the right of a
friend, which ever implies equality,
your excuses for your silence cannot be

admitted—Oh, my good friend, they are the worst that can be framed—and sorry I am to tell you so.—Oh thou of little resolution, who so soon can’st relinquish thy boasted attachment to virtue, whose heart yields to every slight and transient temptation, the honour of thy youth forsaken and forgot; in what manner shall I address you? How shall the admonitions of thy friend reach thy ears, filled with flattery and falsehood? or how shall my words gain a passage to thy heart, when all the avenues are choaked with variety, and filled with the love of licentious pleasure? I cannot so far forget my former interest in you, as not to warn you, with friendly voice, to avoid the edge of the precipice that yawns beneath you, and where, if you fall, ruin and destruction await you. I cannot help extending my hand to save you, blind to your own good, and ignorant of your own welfare. How many are the subterfuges vice flies to,

en-

endeavouring to palliate her actions with the semblance of right? Thus you call the acquaintance of the lewd and abandoned, a knowledge of the world; and thus you still libertinism and folly, vivacity and spirit. Who are your companions? Whom do you associate with? Those whom honour has forsaken, whom virtue disowns, who are unacquainted with honesty, who are strangers to every thing good. Thou shalt not touch pitch but thou shalt be defiled, and a communication with the votaries of folly, shall contaminate the heart. The sentiments and the actions, have a close connexion with each other. And what may not be feared from the acquaintance you may form, when you have not had resolution enough to oppose your honest principles against the vicious, but fashionable, practices of your unhappy friend? If your heart is not totally abandoned, you must have shrunk back with horror on your

first introduction to the paths of licentiousness. Did you not in your mind abhor the ways, and despise the practices you must have been a witness to? I know you must, I am sure you did. The mind educated in the school of virtue, cannot so soon forget her precepts, nor condemn her doctrines. Then what a violence must your soul have suffered! what a prostitution of sentiment have you been guilty of? The man who hears without disapproving, tacitly commends. Then where will this road lead us?—Oh 'tis too dismal to think of it, or cast our eyes only where it appears to terminate.—Misfortune, disease, infamy, wait with open arms to receive you.—The scorn of good men, and the boast of fools you shall live. But I question if your generous heart could support the disgrace which you will find awaits you. When your eyes come to be opened, when all your actions, however bad or dishonest, are hung up in the
fane

LORD STANTON. 101

fame of time, and memory, ever to be
 then shunned, takes them down and presents
 them to your view, the colours heighten'd
 by reflection, and your passions fled, what
 then will become of you?—Can you sup-
 port your own thoughts, or bear the idea,
 even at present, of what may happen here-
 after. Were it only the present and
 momentary pollution your mind may suf-
 fer, it is to be dreaded and avoided;
 but when you must know, that no calcu-
 lation can be made, how far you may
 go,—it is horrid to think of it! You
 know not the nature of the actions you
 commit every moment, how unjust or bad,
 exclusive of the immorality of them, tho'
 custom has gilded them over with the
 appellation of gallantry and amour. If
 we consider that adventure, that to your
 shame you boast of, which vanity and
 false pride makes you think glorious and
 honourable, you will find that you have
 violated another's right, a right which he

purchased, and though, however dishonourable or criminal in him, was still more so in you, who added injustice to guilt. The mind that feels not a repugnance, an abhorrence at the commission of a crime, soon grows callous to all the admonitions of virtue. But I will not think so ill of you; for, as yet, you may have unwillingly suffered yourself to be carried away by the strong tide of pleasure, and look back with sorrow to the peaceful shore you have quitted.—I fear for the consequences; I fear, lest your noble mother, who hourly puts up prayers for her beloved son's welfare and happiness, should hear that he is become a libertine, a man of fashion, or, in other words, one that hesitates not in committing any crime, so he can escape the punishment human laws have annexed to it, no matter how villainous, how unjust. This will drown her reverend age in floods of unavailing tears; it will bend her to the grave, loaden
with

with sorrow for her child. Ill does it become the heir, the future support and promise of a noble house, to debase himself thus; a nobleman should be more eminent for his virtues than his titles.— Oh my good friend, let not my zeal appear impertinent, nor my friendship officious; my regard, my affection for you, inspires my pen, and prompts my heart. May these truths find a place in your mind, and I shall receive the reward of my labour; may they shew things in their true light, and I shall be amply recompensed. The man who offends least, has the greatest right to warn others from the ways of vice: but he who has felt the lash of remorse, has been pierced with the arrows of self-conviction, can more truly describe the miseries attending a course of folly, and the gratification of the passions. I, alas! am an example, a melancholy example of the latter. I gave way to the pleasure I had in beholding Charlotte,

lotte, I indulged myself in her presence. Her face charmed, her manners delighted me. The subtle poison mixed with my blood; it penetrated my heart. Her idea is ever uppermost in my imagination, and to obliterate it will be destruction. I should have opposed its progress. I should have fled from the enchantment. But I gave way to it and honour, faith and justice lie buried under it. Heart-trembling are my reflections, most tormenting are my accusations. But I find, too late, that it is totally impossible to master our passions if they grow too luxuriant, or to confine them again in a proper channel, if we once suffer them to wander from their first course. Then I am the man who can best advise you what to shun, from the poignancy of my own torment; and, by describing my own situation, prevent your meeting a similar ruin.

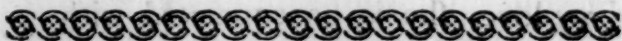
Charlotte is returned, and I am sure that Rogers has opened his heart to her.

Perhaps

Perhaps he has won her affections, and I shall meet with scorn and repulse. She seems to have lost her gaiety. She is more reserved than usual, and seeks to be alone. She grieves at being removed from Merton Grove, for so is Mr. Roger's seat called, and only there can find pleasure. Oh! if she once knew how painful were the wounds occasioned by scorn and contempt, if she experienced the pangs that the unnoticed lover knows, she would feel sympathetically my torture, and, it may be, pity me. But I have never told her of my love, she is unacquainted with my passion. But does not Louisa claim this heart that I have already given her? Have not I disposed of my vows, my love?— That neglected maid pines in solitude, expecting every hour the performance of my promises, and the confirmation of my passion? Ah Louisa, thou wilt not execrate the unhappy Thompson, when thou knowest what he suffers. Thou wilt not

imprecate curses on his head, who has already experienced all the rage of heaven, offended at his perfidy. Thus is my time spent in unavailing lamentations, in tormenting reflections, and fruitless complaints. If I form resolutions to act as a man, who wishes to be virtuous should, the sight of Charlotte banishes them all, and I remain the slave of guilt and love. In this state will you suffer me to call myself your friend, your miserable friend,

J. THOMPSON.



LETTER XLI.

To Lord AVERSTON.

IT is true, my Lord, 'tis too true.—
We, who are interested in the chace, are generally so warm in the pursuit, that we miss the proper opportunity of securing the game. Like young greyhounds we

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over-run the hare, who gives us a double, and we lose her. The slow and sagacious beagle, following her by the scent, unraveling her doubles, and slowly pursuing her steps, gets at her at last. Happy the simile, 'tis our respective cases. You only wait till the fruit drops into your mouth, and I cannot as yet find a blossom on the tree. Convinced of your Lordship's good sense, and thoroughly satisfied of the extent of your capacity, both in laying schemes and bringing them to bear, must conclude, that you are so thoroughly established in Sir Marmaduke's family, and Miss Conyers's affection, that you almost bid a defiance to the mutability of fortune; at least you have put it out of her power to shew you as slippery tricks as she does the rest of the world, who do not take such pains to secure her. This, though your modesty and silence, with regard to your own good qualities, will not permit you to allow, yet I am pretty

well convinced of it from your letter. You have my best, my heartiest, wishes for your success. As for me, my Lord, I have opened my *honourable trenches* before the town, and, hopes, bare hopes, are all that I have to subsist upon. I must believe that Thompson is my rival, but I think he has not broke the ice yet. They were with us at Merton Grove for a few days, and Kitty, my sister, at my request, prevailed on Mrs. Thompson to leave her beauteous charge for a week with us. How happy was I. We three always made a party, and I had an opportunity of breathing my vows to the adorable maid, in the presence of my sister, without restraint. She heard me, because she could not help it, and that was the negligent manner in which she received my protestations—yet without disgust. She reproved me not, neither did she forbid me. Then my state is not very desperate. But Thompson has a great advantage over me.

stantly with her, he can catch those calm and placid moments, when her soul, unburthened with care or thought, is susceptible of any impression that may be given it. Besides, he is a man of probity, of unexceptionable character; genteel and pleasing in his person, and has been connected in the Earl of Stanton's family, who is now gone abroad. These things, all considered, give him a greater chance of succeeding with her, than I can have, who just snatch a look, and am obliged to depart again. Though perhaps I may be better off from that very circumstance, for it favours strongly of the husband to be always in the same house, never to lose sight of the object. It is enough to make one sick, and perhaps it may be of service to me. All that I know is, that I am in for it over head and ears, and how I shall get out again I know not. To hope for any benefit but what arises from the grave dint
of

of importunity, I must apply to your lordship, whom I hold to be a Machiavel in all matters of amour. I frequently think of our old atchievements, and my admiration rises in proportion every time; to recollect with what ease you brought about matters deemed almost impossible. As you know me interested in whatever concerns you, I shall expect to be honoured with your correspondence. I have neither news nor scandal to send you from this dull place; and can only add, that it is the unanimous wish of the whole family, that you would revisit Merton grove. Believe me ever your lordship's obliged friend and servant,

WILLIAM ROGERS.

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

To Mr. THOMPSON.

THANKS, many thanks dear Thompson for your friendly letter; I knew your regard for me, and never could have had a greater proof of it than this epistle: but shall I tell you, it came too late. My silence may have occasioned you to think me lost to all sense of shame, and to all the ties of friendship; but I trust I am yet alive to both, and that I have regained the shore I had so disgracefully quitted. A man who acknowledges his errors is wiser this moment than he was the last; and I am ready to confess, and take shame to myself, for my past conduct.

Non luisse perdet, sed non incidere ludo.

Then behold me once more the man you left me; though I fear not such as you would wish me, or I ought to be. I have not made a stay in the regions of folly long enough

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to suffer contamination in every degree; though I could wish that I had not been stained at all. Yet not to thy letter, however well intended, or thy sentiments, however well expressed, is this change owing; but to another, and a more unexpected cause. This is not derogating from your merit, tho' it increases the power of her who effected this alteration. It is a she, and such a one, that I marvel at my blindness for not having seen her before, for it seems she has been visible, though only one winter before this.

Hilgrove and I went to Ranelagh. Fatigued with a repetition of the same thing, and fauntering round that everlasting circle, I was going to propose quitting it; when Hilgrove's returning a salute that he received, drew my eyes, which were turned another way, to see from whence it came. I saw the gentleman, and with him was a young lady, for she engrossed all my attention, who appeared more lovely than I had

ever

ever yet seen one of her sex. I stopped and gazed with a foolish astonishment.

"What is the matter?" said Hilgrove;

"Who is that lady?"

"One out of your reach."

"Is she married?"

"No? but lord Averston, whom you saw me bow to, is paying his addresses to her, and he is not a man easily to be baffled. Assure yourself that to a thorough knowledge of the world, he joins a resolution capable of undertaking and perfecting any thing."

"That does not alarm me in the least; but dear Hilgrove, who is the lady?"

"Nay, there I am as much at a loss as any one, for I know her not: it is not among that class of people I am acquainted. Perhaps, Averston may be enchanted with her beauty; but from what I can learn of his circumstances, he would rather pursue a fortune; perhaps she may have both, but I do not know her."

"Thou

“Thou art universally acquainted, and
“for my sake, James, dear James find her
“out.”

“I will step and ask herself, if you are
“so anxious.”

“Nay, do not laugh at me, for I am
“really smitten.”

“You only fancy so.”

But I had told him the truth, and the frequent meeting her in the course of the evening confirmed the liking I had taken to her. And was it not natural to admire what was so truly lovely? Her height is something above that of the generality of her sex; but then the exact proportion of her make, prevents your taking notice of it. Her shape is exquisitely genteel, inexpressibly fine; and there is such a grandeur and majesty in her air and manner, which impresses you with awe, did not her face, where benevolence and beauty smile, shew the good-nature of her disposition, and the tenderness of her heart, and tempt you to ad-

addresses her. She is very fair, her eyes are blue, and her lips—I cannot describe them! We will not contend about Charlotte; but if you were to see my mistress, you would soon forget the former. Never was there a fairer temple of the divinity, with less visible imperfections. What may be discovered upon a closer acquaintance, I know not; but, if she answers to what she appears, I shall pitch my tent here. Thus I communed with myself as I pursued her steps round the tedious path of the rotunda. If lord Averston seemed pleased at any thing she said, it gave me uneasiness I never knew before. In short I commenced her admirer and his rival, without giving myself time to think of the change that had so suddenly happened in my bosom. I followed and watched her motions, in hopes of being able to find out who she was by the carriage that took her up. As she and her company left the room, lord Averston was called aside by a person who had something to say to him,

him, and they went on; as they arrived at the door, we heard a greater noise than common, and found the servant in waiting had been drinking, and began a riot; the consequence however, was a stoppage of the carriages. The ladies were extremely terrified; but so far advanced they could not retreat to a place of safety: the old gentleman who was with them, received a blow from one of the fellows, and in attempting to draw his sword, was knocked down. The young lady gave a shriek; and while some gentlemen helped him up, I secured the fellow, and gave him in charge to some constable, who had appeared to quell the disturbance. An effort was made to rescue the criminal out of my hands, but it was unsuccessful: and I had the great satisfaction of securing this lady from being hurt or insulted; and of contributing to put a stop to the riot: for being pretty active and conversant in the Athletic exercise, with the assistance of tripping up two or three
of

of the ringleaders, they did not choose to come near me, and the rioters were taken into custody. I had now time to return to the lady in whose behalf I had engaged, and offer my service to conduct her to her coach, at the same time hoping that she would suffer no inconvenience from the fright. She, as well as the lady who was with her, whom I since understand to be the wife of the gentleman who was knocked down, and whose name is Sir Marmaduke Grigsby, returned me many thanks; and Sir Marmaduke, who was by that time pretty well recovered, offered me his acknowledgements. By this time their carriage was drawn up, and I had the happiness of handing the lovely girl into it, whose beauty was heightened by the agitations she was in. Lord Averston, who could not penetrate the crowd till that moment, then came up and entered the carriage, which drove off directly. But I should not omit telling you, that both lady Grigsby and her husband

husband, had insisted on my calling on them; and he begged to know my address, that he might wait on me to thank me for the trouble I had taken. It is not to be supposed, but this invitation was extremely agreeable to me, and I promised to wait on the ladies to enquire after their healths. Lord Averston, as he stepped into the coach, seemed to regard me with no friendly eye: and my envy was excited at his being so happily situated. Hilgrove's chariot took us up, and we drove home. Our conversation was chiefly about the accident that happened, the lady the object of my admiration, and what were the connexions lord Averston had with her.

“ Ah Hilgrove, if you regard me, delay
“ not enquiring what may be of the greatest
“ consequence to me. If she is not abso-
“ lutely engaged to Lord Averston, I will
“ attempt her; if she is, I must endeavour
“ to forget her idea. Then I may truly
“ say, that

“ Too

"Too late for redress, but too soon for my ease,
"I saw you, I lov'd, and I wish'd I could please."

"Ha, ha," replied Hilgrove, laughing,
"then you must be deeply in for it, if you
"have got as far as poetry already. I al-
"ways judged *that* one of the last stages
"of the distemper: but come man, have
"courage, go and see her to-morrow, and
"you will know who she is. But take my
"word for it, whether he is courting her
"person or her fortune, you will have a
"formidable rival in Lord Averston."

"I shall surmount opposition, if she is to
"be come at; every means to win her shall
"be tried."

"This is an unusual resolution," replied
my friend; "and you must have con-
"ceived a great passion, and in a short
"time, to be thus bent on encountering
"Lord Averston."

Adieu my friend: retain for me still the
same kindness that inspired your heart in
dic-

dictating your last letter to me. May you be as happy as I wish you.

GEORGE BENSON.

L E T T E R XLIII.

To the same.

THE first proof that I received of the impression Miss Conyers had made on me was, not being able to sleep that night after I returned from Ranelagh. I was restless, uneasy, and even then began to taste unhappiness. I revolved in my imagination, the opposition I was likely to meet with, and the difficulties that I must encounter. To possess that charming woman, every consideration was trifling that could impede me; and nothing but her smiles were wanting, to animate me to every thing. If I dosed, I dreamed of her: and if I remained awake her idea was uppermost. The next symptom I perceived in myself was, that

I took

I took particular pains with my dress that morning, but yet I was not pleased: my hair was not well done, my face was pale. Never had I so little opinion of myself as when I set out to go to Sir Marmaduke Grigby's. But nothing could stop me, and away I went. With palpitating heart, I rapped at the door, and was desired to walk in. Lady Grigby was alone in a very genteely furnished parlour, and at my entrance, declared her happiness in having an opportunity of returning thanks to her deliverer. She loaded me with compliments and acknowledgments of gratitude: spoke of my prowess as heroical; and had I been only attentive to her, she would have made me really vain of myself. Upon enquiring after the young lady, she rung for a servant to let Miss Conyers know that there was a gentleman below, who came to enquire how she did after her fright last night. The old lady in the mean time heaped her civilities upon me; and I had enough to

do to support the profusion of her kindness. At length the adorable maid appeared. An elegant morning dress, instead of concealing, added to her beauties. I stammered out a compliment, sufficient to let her know what I came about; but Lady Grigby, good woman, took upon her to interpret for me, and the blushing Matilda returned me her thanks for the services I had rendered her. Oh, how did those thanks overpay them, had they been ten thousand times greater. I had yet another ceremony to go through, and that was occasioned by Sir Marmaduke Grigby's entrance: he was just returned from punishing the fellow who had struck him. With the remembrance of the offence warm on his mind, and the recollection, that by securing the fellow I had given him an opportunity of being revenged on him, it was next to an impossibility to avoid his compliments. I suffered them with as good a grace as I could; and then he related the
steps

steps he had taken to punish the rascal properly. It appeared in the course of the examination before the magistrate, that the offender was the servant of Lord M——.

“Now, Sir,” said the Baronet, “you know his Lordship is a courtier, a plumb man with the ministry; and as I am in the opposition in the lower house, perhaps there might have been a design in it, or I would have forgiven the fellow: had it been one of the footmen of any person who was of our side of the question, it might have been only deemed an excess that freedom will sometimes degenerate into, but as it was quite otherwise, I am apprehensive it prognosticated some dangerous attempt against the liberty of the subject.”

Unhappily his lady was not of the same opinion, and she immediately commenced an argument that might have lasted for some time, had not the arrival of Lord

Averston suspended it for a little, and indeed, at length terminated it by his superior authority.

While they were thus engaged, and before his appearance, I had an opportunity of contemplating the charms of Miss Conyers. Oh, Thompson, nothing can excel the lucid whiteness of her bosom; nothing surpass the elegance of her person, and symmetry of her shape. Possessed of a timid modesty, that increased her beauties, she shewed the delicacy of her manners, and the sensibility of her heart. Her demeanour has not that air of assurance so visible in all those who are conversant in the gay world, and which, I cannot help thinking, takes from the beauties of the softer sex, whose grand characteristic is modesty, and the sense of shame. Yet she is not so bashful, as to be prevented from delivering her sentiments whenever she sees occasion. Her good sense, and improved understanding, is very

con-

conspicuous upon every occasion, when she chuses to display herself; but that is very seldom, and you never hear her give her opinion, but you are inclined to wish she would speak oftener and longer. She is very conversant with the best modern authors, and speaks with judgment of their respective merits. This required some application, and some time to effect, and it is what few fine ladies can attempt to do. She has an excellent memory, and repeats, with the greatest propriety, the quotations she makes use of in her conversation. This knowledge of her qualifications you may suppose was not gained in the first day's interview. It has been the result of several visits, and then sparingly shewn by her, who seems to hide her perfections, lest she should be accounted vain or presuming. She shrinks back and conceals herself from the admiration she must necessarily acquire, instead of meeting it, and assuming a merit

from it. A strange instance of self-denial and moderation in a woman!—But while I am thus employing myself in her praises, I forgot to give you an account of our behaviour at Sir Marmaduke's. Lord Averston's approach suspended this matrimonial dispute on politics; and by the bye, I cannot help observing that there is no one thing in the world that can make a man and his wife more ridiculous than by disputing on matters that do not, or cannot concern them. His Lordship paid his compliments to the Ladies on his entrance, expressed his happiness at seeing them so well after their fright. He addressed Miss Conyers in a particular manner, and spoke with a tenderness and concern, that shewed he was deeply interested in her welfare; and gave us to understand, that more than mere humanity was the cause of uneasiness upon her account. I imagined that she did not return those looks of fondness which his Lordship lavished

wished upon her, but thanked him with that civility and reserve in her manner, that shewed she was not much affected at his address. She looked, I thought, angrily, when he went further, and thanked me for the care I had taken of Miss Conyers, whose happiness was inseparably connected with his own. My reply was what would naturally follow such a speech, that though I was pleased at having rendered him a service, yet I should have interested myself in the safety of any Lady where I found I could be of the least use. The conversation concerning the servant was again renewed, and Lord Averston was appealed to as the supreme judge upon the occasion, who could not avoid taking Lady Grigsby's part. When this dispute was recommenced, I made an attempt to depart, but was prevailed on to stay dinner, at the earnest solicitation of Lady Grigsby and her husband. I accordingly retired till the hour of dinner, leav-

ing Lord Averston behind me. I threw myself into the first coffee-house I met with, and indulged my raptures. To be thus happy, and so unexpectedly, was more than my most sanguine imagination could have foreseen, or almost hoped for. I was overjoyed, and could not have believed that in so short a time I should have waded so far into the sea of love. Fifty times I looked at my watch to know whether it was time to return to dinner, and at length the hour came. I do not recollect to have ever longed so much for a dinner, though I had not the best appetite in the world. I found Lord Averston there on my return, and one Sir Christopher Blackford, whom I also conjecture to be an admirer of Miss Conyers. He has been abroad, but, as I think, to very little purpose; and if I should have made no greater improvement, my mother's advice was certainly right. Our occurrences at the table were common. But I was too much employed

ployed in beholding Matilda to mind any thing else. My attention was engrossed by her entirely. Soon after the cloth was removed, the ladies retired, and Sir Marmaduke, who loves his bottle, pressed us to drink with him, which we in general declined. Lord Averston stole up stairs to the ladies; and Sir Christopher was also uneasy to go, and seeing no further probability of having the happiness of Miss Conyers's company, I took my leave. Sir Marmaduke pressed me to visit him again, whenever I found it agreeable, and I promised to call on him. In consequence of which I have left my name there once, when they were not at home, and had the pleasure of seeing Miss Conyers in another morning visit which I paid them. Thus I go on, my dear Thompson, and was I not right in saying your letter came too late? The fear of rendering myself unworthy a woman of honour and virtue, has altered my conduct. I detest the state I

was in when I saw her. I despise myself. In vain has Hillgrove hung out the allurements of pleasure. He is no more master of my inclinations. My thoughts tending to one object, cannot wander from it. I love, and the fierce flame which burns in my heart, has destroyed all other inferior desires.—So Moses's rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians of Egypt, turned into serpents, and shewed the true from the false worship. My hopes and wishes are confined to a point, and if they chance to succeed, shall ever be fixed there.. But how to ensure that success I know not. It depends upon fortune. Dear Thompson wish me happy, and that can only be from enjoying the smiles of Matilda Conyers.

Thine ever,

GEORGE BENSON,

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

To the same.

YOU heretofore complained of my not writing to you; you were angry at my silence. Now you will have reason to say I am troublesome. But if you are a lover, and will sympathize with me, you will be elated with my hopes, will be affected with my fears. How many changes does the heart of a man in love suffer in an hour, in a moment! I complain to Hilgrove. He laughs at me. He knows not the delicacy, the inexpressible uneasiness attending a true, a generous passion. Asgill has forsaken me too. He never comes near me. I have been to look for him in vain. Alas! he will not correspond with me for the future. He looks upon me as the votary of idle pleasure. I have lost his esteem, and have forfeited his friendship.

ship.—Ah, if he knew of the alteration of my conduct, if he was acquainted with the change in my sentiments, he would not forsake me. Left thus to myself, I am at a loss what to do. But the passion which animate me, leaves me no choice. I must pursue the steps of Matilda: I must see her, or cease to exist. In vain I attended the places of public resort: she had not been there lately. I dreaded a repulse by going too often to the house, and caution was necessary to prevent it. At length I saw her again at Ranelagh, with lady Grigsby, as usual, some other ladies, Lord Averston and Sir Christopher Blackford. Thus surrounded, it was next to an impossibility to have an opportunity of speaking to her: however, I joined the party, and addressed Lady Grigsby, whom I found totally disengaged, while the gentlemen were entertaining Miss Conyers, and the ladies whom she was walking with. I had chatted some time with Lady Grigsby before Matilda perceived me,

me, and then she seemed rather surprised than displeased that I had made myself one of her company. But I fancy Lord Averston would have been more pleased at my absence; for he very coolly noticed me, and, though, during the remainder of the evening, we often talked together, it was rather the effect of necessity than choice, and ever with distant politeness. Lady Grigsby was quite civil and friendly: she blamed me for not calling oftener, and asked me to take a bit of supper with them that night. It was the completion of my wishes, and I accepted the invitation. Lord Averston took care to be of the party with Miss Conyers, and I was obliged to follow them alone, while my rival enjoyed the happiness of his mistress's company and conversation. We were very lively and merry at table. A number of sprightly things were said, and we all seemed inclined to gaiety. But I could not perceive that Lord Averston was better treated as
an

an admirer, than Sir Christopher. Her eyes seldom met his, nor was she at all gracious to him. He was chagrined; and endeavoured to prevent its being observed, by affecting a great flow of spirits. We did not part till the watchman announced it to be three in the morning. I retired with my heart full of love, and my head full of claret, and dreamed of Matilda till the time of rising. I found Apgill, when I came down, waiting for my uprising.

“Ah,” said he, “late hours at night, require late hours in the morning, and you rakes never think of the hours of merriment, how they slip away.”

“Really you are right, my good friend, they pass’d unheeded away; but though I was a rake, it was in sober good company.”

“That’s a little paradoxical, but I suppose you can make it out.”

I informed him where I had been.

“Aye,”

"Aye," said he; "how long have you
"been acquainted in that family?"

I informed him of that too, and the passion that I had conceived for Miss Conyers, my inviolable attachment to her, and the alteration that it had occasioned in my conduct; the irregularity of which, I frankly owned to him I feared had been the occasion of his absenting himself from me. He acknowledged it, and assigned as a reason, that he did not chuse to make himself disagreeable to me, by delivering his sentiments on my proceedings; and that his regard for me would not permit him to be silent, but that he was truly rejoiced to see that my eyes were open, and that I was ashamed of myself. I embraced the good old man, and thanked him for his kindness.

"You shall never, my worthy Mentor,
"have occasion to reproach me again, or
"threaten me with the loss of your friend-
"ship. But you, who have such univer-
"sal

“sal acquaintance in this city, do you
 “know Miss Conyers, or Sir Marmaduke
 “Grigby?”

“I have seen the latter,” he replied; but
 “we are not acquainted.”

“Ah, I hoped to have received some
 “intelligence from you, but I find I am
 “still to seek. I have been but a month
 “acquainted with her, and I am a twelve-
 “month gone in love.”

“Ah, young men have nothing in view
 “but the pretty person of a woman; that
 “will hide all other defects.”

“It will reconcile us to them; and per-
 “sonal beauty has such an effect upon the
 “most sensible of mankind, as plainly
 “convinces us of its extraordinary power.
 “Nay, the Turks have a proverb, which
 “says, that the fire of hell can’t burn a
 “pretty face. However ridiculous their
 “adage, yet it shews how great a reverence,
 “even uncultivated nations have for
 “beauty.”

“It

“It is pleasant enough to hear your arguments. But, of what family is she?
“What fortune has she? Are not these
“questions to be asked by a man, who
“should endeavour to match with one
“suitable to him in every respect?”

“Ah, she is every thing that is to be
“wished for, I am sure, and I doubt not,
“but her connexions are good, from the
“family she lives in, and the respect they
“pay her. And if she should chance to
“fail in point of fortune, I am determined
“not to put a trifling, or indeed any sum
“in competition with my happiness.”

“This is determining matters in a very
“great hurry indeed. I hope you may
“not have cause to repent.”

“I can never repent, if I am in possession
“of Matilda Conyers. But give me your
“advice, my good friend, let me avail
“myself of your experience; I am con-
“cerned at despising your admonitions,
“but do not therefore imagine me incorri-
“gible.

“gible. How shall I best apply myself
“to her, how shall I succeed with her?”

“These are matters which the experi-
“ence of age will give no light to, nor
“will it avail. But there are general max-
“ims to be observed with women, who
“really possess good sense, that cannot fail.
“I say to a woman of sense, for there
“is no such thing as laying down rules
“for the obtaining of some women, in
“whose eyes the paring a cucumber with
“dexterity may be the greatest merit.
“The man of honour is above dissimula-
“tion or disguise. To gain a woman by
“falsehood, shews she is not worth having.
“I mean that servile adulation which dis-
“tinguishes some men in their addresses to
“women. The honest man will deliver
“his sentiments without varnishing them
“over; and when he has won the object
“of his affections, she will find him always
“a lover, because he will treat her as well
“after marriage has made him familiar
“with

“ with her person, as he did before it,
“ when there was a mutual restraint upon
“ them. Many a woman has found it to
“ her cost, that the lover who was a slave,
“ was a tyrant when an husband. Some
“ women, who are vain, affect to tame a
“ rake and a libertine, because a reclaimed
“ rake, say they, makes the best husband;
“ that is, they are constrained to behave
“ as they ought to do, when they have no
“ abilities to act otherwise. A very sen-
“ sible author has justly said of much such
“ another class of men, that they give to
“ God the devil’s earnings. Avoid there-
“ fore the reputation of a man of intrigue
“ and extraordinary gallantry, for though
“ the vain and ambitious part of the sex
“ may tempt the trial, yet a sensible wo-
“ man will shun it. It is scarcely worth
“ her trouble to secure the heart so many
“ have had a claim to. Let your actions
“ be just and honest. The woman that
“ reposes confidence in a man, gives him
“ the

“the greatest proof of her esteem. The
“betraying it is sufficient to lose her.
“Some are so foolish to imagine that a
“temptation to sin is a proof of affection,
“and their own resistance the greatest
“effort of virtue. But the woman of
“sense must despise a man who has so bad
“an opinion of her, even for a moment,
“as to conceive the thought. What sig-
“nifies my telling you my opinions. You
“have already chalked out a path of your
“own, and will pursue it in spite of all I
“can say to you.”

“Ah do not wrong me, though I may,
“and have erred; yet I am sensible of
“my faults. I will take your advice, I
“will be directed by your counsels.”

“Well, well—I shall see you again, it is
“late now—Good day to you.”

Asgill judged wrongly of me, if he
imagined his good advice would be thrown
away upon me. Is there a more humili-
ating state to a man of sensibility than to
convict

convict himself of an error, to reflect on follies, to have an eternal representation of his misdeeds before his eyes? How have I lamented the delusions which drew me aside, though for so short a time, from the road I should have pursued. Perhaps if Matilda heard it she would despise me. Oh, may my folly be an impenetrable secret to her. Adieu my friend.

GEORGE BENSON.



LETTER XLV.

TO WILLIAM ROGERS, Esq.

FORTUNE, the goddess of fools, ever opposes the designs of the wise; or rather, contrary to all other deities, she takes care of those who worship her least, for a fool is too self-sufficient to demand any assistance; or rather, perhaps, like a good mother, she provides for those who can-

cannot manage for themselves. Whatever cause it is, the blind goddess has declared against me. Voltaire observes, that the spilling a basin of water saved France from ruin, and gave a turn to the affairs of Europe, when the victorious Duke of Marlborough had so often defeated the French forces. An accident as trifling has, I fear, set up a rival to me in Miss Conyers, that will give me an infinity of trouble. The servants at Ranelagh, were rioters. Miss Conyers was going to her carriage, was extremely frightened, the unfortunate Sir Marmaduke venturing in her defence, got his head broke; and this young fellow, who goes by the name of Benson, rescued her from danger, and conveyed her to her carriage in safety. As the devil would have it, I was kept behind by a prating fellow, who was talking nonsense to me, and reminding me of promises which he must have known very well I intended to forget. Thus I lost that opportunity of

signalizing myself before my mistress, and preventing the admission of this Benson into the Grigsby family. There is nothing a woman admires so much in a man as running his head against a wall, or doing some such heroical action, for her sake. This Benson looks just like a man of this sort. Young, handsome, active; and an Englishman, to gain his mistress, would attack the lions in the tower. Upon my soul I don't half like him;—what perplexes me is, that Lady Grigsby is very much attached to him, and Sir Marmaduke must approve whatever she likes, for it is only in the grand point, the interest of his country, that he dares contradict his wife. Perhaps the old gentlewoman may have a colt's tooth in her head, and if so, I shall be plagued with her, for I had every thing else *en train* which could tempt age and ambition, though joined together. But as he visits often at the house, the young lady may perhaps conceive a liking for him;

him; that's what I fear most—Women will sometimes take a strange bias; overlook what they ought to prize, and fly to what they should shun. Benson has all that prettiness in his manner, which the girls esteem so much. Show, show, captivates them. However, I can't help acknowledging he is genteel. But I believe he does not abound in sense. He is generally silent, and when he does speak, says but little. He is extremely modest; and, to mend the matter, is, I fear, in love with Matilda Conyers. All the hope that I have is, that a modest man in love, has very little probability of success in this age. Another thing, I cannot fathom Miss Conyers's opinion of him. She commends his gallantry and courage, and says no more of him. Lady Grigsby has her mouth always full of his praises. I have already warned her of the mischief she may do, by thus unreasonably applauding him, and have stopped her loquacity a little.

little. I do all I can to countermine this dangerous enemy. I hint, on proper occasions, that he is not known in town, that he may be an adventurer. That the gentleman I saw in his company at Ranelagh is one of the most debauched libertines about the town; that birds of a feather flock together, and consequently his apparent modesty and shyness of behaviour, is only a cloak to screen his follies from being remarked. These observations are not without effect, and on any other woman but Matilda Conyers would make so strong an impression, that she would throw herself into my arms at once. But she prides herself upon being a sensible woman. Heaven knows these sensible women, as they call themselves, generally are guilty of the most foolish actions in the world, and screen themselves under the extraordinary opinion people have of them to justify themselves afterward. This is my situation with Miss Conyers: for she is

so cried up for an unusual understanding, a peculiar propriety of manners, and many other mental qualifications, that her brain is turned, and she thinks she cannot be wrong. But shall I tell you that since I have suffered under the apprehension of a formidable rival, that Matilda's beauties, which I have hitherto overlooked, as deeming myself pretty secure of them, begin to unfold themselves to my view, and I cannot think of losing so fine a woman, exclusive of her fortune, without feeling a particular uneasiness. It may be imagined that I shall degenerate into love. I promise you if I can possibly avoid it, I will. But there is no knowing what may happen, and my conceiving a jealousy of Benson is the first step to it. Perhaps it may be only the fears which caution has, and which prudence dictates. I double my diligence to prevent surprise, and use extraordinary care to keep Lady Grigby fast to my interest. My precautions had

so

so good an effect, that Benson was not seen at the house for ten days. One unlucky night we met at Ranelagh again, and her ladyship gaped at him with open mouth as if she would devour him, brought him home to sup with us, and was excessively happy and merry. The old lady has some queer notions, I fear, in her head; and I shall take every means and opportunity to bring them to perfection, for I shall benefit by it at any rate. If he should form any intrigue with Lady Grigsby, from the hopes of getting at her purse, it will prevent Miss Conyers from ever thinking of him. If he is a needy adventurer, as I hope he is, this will be his first step. If her ladyship should make any overtures to him, and he should despise them, it is all over with him again, for she could never bear the sight of him. I would inspire Sir Marmaduke with proper suspicions concerning his wife's honour, but that I imagine he would con-

nive at it, and by that means gain such a superiority over her in argument, which would, no doubt, be the consideration of his forbearance. If I thought this would be the only consequence of his visiting the Grigby family, I should be perfectly easy. But if it should turn out otherwise, I should never forgive myself, for arguing from wrong principles, and not putting it out of the power of chance to injure or baffle me. Upon these considerations, I think common discretion must justify my proceedings to have him expelled Grigby House as soon as I can, for there's no trusting him with the foolish knight, or the liquorish lady. However, I believe, all is safe as yet; and am certain he has made no progress in Matilda's heart, for he has never spoken to her in private, or been there when I was absent. There is not a servant in the family that I have not secured, not excepting Matilda's woman, whom, though she is every day loading

with favours, and heaping repeated kindnesses upon, yet so dearly does she love a little bit of forbidden sin, that for a very small sum of money, and a very large sum of promises, she has sold herself to me, and there is not an action or word of her mistress's that can possibly escape me; and as yet if I have not had any great reason to hope, I have had none to despair. But if any thing should happen which should give me cause to think that my interest was declining, I have a *coup de main* which will not fail to secure the Grigsbys. In the main, this little apprehension of a rival may be of service to my cause, as it will make me more attentive, and call forth all my powers. I do not despair of success. Adieu my dear Rogers, and be assured of the friendship of

AVERSTON.

LETTER XLVI.

To Mr. THOMPSON.

I Have cause, my dear friend, to be pleased, and at the same time am concerned. These different sensations arise from different causes; let me account for them regularly. In the course of our conversation, the last time I was at Sir Marmaduke Grigsby's, it accidentally happened that the merits of some new plays were canvassed, and both Miss Conyers and Lady Grigsby declared themselves great admirers of theatrical entertainments. This did not escape my notice, as I thought then that I should more frequently meet them at the play-houses, than at any other public place; and that there I might have an opportunity of speaking to Miss Conyers, which was denied me any where else, by the close attendance of her admirers. Hilgrove called on me the next morning, and told

told me, that he had undoubted intelligence of Garrick's intention to perform, on a particular night, and that it was a secret as yet. As I had heard them express their admiration of that celebrated actor, I took care to secure places, and the morning before sent my servant with compliments and tickets, and that I would wait on them to escort them to the theatre. Lady Grigsby invited me to dinner; and when I went there, was much pleased at the opportunity I had given her of seeing her favourite actor in one of his principal characters. I had also the happiness of receiving Miss Conyers's thanks, and enjoyed a conversation with her for half an hour, without being interrupted. At length Mr. Mannersley was introduced by Sir Marmaduke. This gentleman I find is also a suitor to Miss Conyers, is a man of good fortune, and a neighbour of the Baronet's in the country. In the course of the conversation, I found he had a great,

deal of unimproved good sense, that he had lived the greatest part of his life in the country, and had all that honesty and openness in his manner which bespoke the goodness of his heart, and the sincerity of his disposition. As Sir Marmaduke declined going to the play, and Mr. Mannersley expressed a desire of seeing Mr. Garrick, I complimented him with the vacant seat, as I had engaged four. This was extremely agreeable to him, and we set off together. I had the happiness of sitting by Miss Conyers the whole evening, of entertaining her, of conversing with her, of pressing her hand in conveying her to her coach. I had the pleasure of watching the effect the representation had upon her, saw her brilliant eyes swimming in tears at the imaginary distress of the scene, and saw her bosom heave with the sigh of compassion. Her sensibility is exquisite: she has a tender heart, and the most delicate sentiments inspire it. It completes
her

her beauty, it adds the most bewitching softness to her person, and there is no withstanding the attraction. It is unnecessary to add, that I drank large draughts of love from her eyes, that my heart throbbed with agitation too powerful to be supported with calmness whenever I touched her, that I abandoned myself to my passion, surrendered myself totally to her. Though in the midst of a crowded audience, in spite of the powers of the first performer in Europe, I could not disengage my thoughts from her. I fell insensibly into a reverie, and she was the object of all my meditations. I had been reading my favourite Montesquieu a few days before; the fragment of his essay on Taste had given me inexpressible delight. I compared Matilda's actions with his sentiments, and found that to real beauty she had added those graces which he will not allow to accompany an handsome woman.

“Grace,” says that celebrated writer,
 “is seldomer found in the face, than in the
 “manner; for our manner is produced
 “every moment, and can create surprize
 “in a word; a woman can be beautiful
 “but one way, she can be graceful a thou-
 “sand.”

Is it impossible then, that graceful man-
 ners, and a beautiful person, should be
 joined together? an example before my eyes
 shews me that it is not. Then how perfect,
 how amiable must the woman be, who pos-
 sesses both!

“Graces,” says he in another place, “are
 “more commonly found in the mind than
 “in the countenance, for a beautiful face
 “appears immediately and conceals no-
 “thing; but the mind does not shew itself,
 “but by little and little, when it chuses it,
 “and as much as it chuses, it can conceal
 “itself to appear again, and produce that
 “sort of surprize, which constitutes
 “Grace.”

Then Matilda is graceful ! for her powers expand like the rose of the morning, by degrees ; and you are surprized at the beauty and fragrance of the flower. Yes, Thompson, the justice of her sentiments surprizes ; her manners, the effect of nature, are admirable.

“ The graces are not acquired : to have them one must be simple and unaffected.

“ But how can one study to be so ? ”

She derives all her graces from the innocence of her heart : from the excellence of her understanding in distinguishing the natural, the graceful, the elegant, from the studied, the affected, and the awkward. Thus am I to judge from her external qualifications of the powers of her mind. Her manners, pure and uncorrupted, lead me to the source whence they flow, her heart ; and I see with joy, the effect of its purity in her conduct. You will tell me perhaps, that there is no standard, no criterion for beauty. I deny it : though every man is re-

gulated by his own private feeling with regard to the choice he makes; yet he will not say that the woman he has chosen is a beauty, because he likes her. There is a certain junction of personal comeliness and graceful manners; which, when in one woman, must constitute true beauty. Every man might look up to her as surpassing the partial idea he has formed, and to which by a length of time, he becomes habituated and reconciled. Yet he will acknowledge the superiority; because he cannot contradict or deny a self-evident truth, that his own heart will not permit him to dispute. You will laugh at me, my dear Thompson, for thus rendering beauty systematical. But do you not consider, that at the same time, I am apologizing in the best manner for my own conduct, and offering reasons to prove that I ought of necessity to be in love. But you will object to the probability of my forming these arguments in a playhouse! 'Tis even so; and I was totally

tally engaged in them. As I was not on the footing of an intimate acquaintance, her conversation was rather reserved : but I found a means of engaging her in a subject that she could not help delivering her sentiments upon. Every moment I had fresh cause to admire her, whether I considered her personal or mental accomplishments. When we had conveyed the ladies home, Mr. Mannersley and I were pressed to sup with lady Grigsby, and I never was so happy. Miss Conyers seemed to have thrown off a great deal of the restraint that had prevented her displaying herself before us as strangers ; and she gave me cause to approve the choice my heart had made. I know not in what light she can esteem me, whether I visit at lady Grigsby's as a mere acquaintance, or whether she can perceive by my behaviour that she has captivated my heart. However she may regard me, while I keep my sentiments to myself, her behaviour to me will be still polite,

polite, still easy. Perhaps were I to make her acquainted with my sentiments, I should suffer the loss of even those smiles she bestows on me, while she yet looks on me with an eye of indifference. She does not seem to favour one lover more than another: yet if I still preserve a silence with regard to the impression she has made upon me; another in the mean time may win her heart, which perhaps the sincerity and ardency of my affection might move to pity me. At all events then I am determined to acquaint her with the situation of my heart: but I am still resolved to preserve my disguise; and if I can prevail on her to receive the addresses of Mr. Benson, I will endeavour to make her happy as the Countess of Stanton. But I dread this great number of lovers that appear about her: though there is no occasion to encrease my passion by opposition; yet they will make me miserable by still alarming my fears and apprehensions. Every time I go there I see a fresh
suitor

LORD STANTON. F59

sutor. Like the heads of the hydra, they spring up in constant succession. Oh that the arrows of Hercules were mine to destroy them. Yours.

GEORGE BENSON.



L E T T E R XLVII.

To the same.

MR. Mannersley and I left lady Grigsby's together. He begged we might be better acquainted: gave me his address and demanded mine, giving me to understand, that he would call on me the next day. It was an acquaintance I wished for, and which would be extremely agreeable to me, as I could receive information from him, concerning more things I wished to know relative to Miss Conyers. My head and heart were so full of that lovely girl, that I could take very little rest. All my thoughts were employed in contriving the

the means to acquaint her with my passion, and consulting the most effectual methods of prevailing on her to listen to it. If I slept, I dream'd of her; nor could the illusions of my heated imagination exceed the reality of her beauties. Frank roused me in the morning, by informing me Mr. Aggill waited for my rising. I hastened to meet the good old man,

“ Well,” said he, “ do lovers always indulge themselves thus: I thought love was vigilant, restless, a foe to ease and repose: but you can reconcile them together.”

“ I wish I could: but I am making up in the morning the loss of rest at night.”

I then proceeded to tell him what had passed since I had seen him before; and what my determinations were with regard to opening my sentiments to her.

“ If she is not engaged by affection to any body, and she thinks favourably of you, it may be of service to you: if she

“ is,

“ is, I suppose she will be ingenuous enough
 “ to say so, and put a stop to your growing
 “ passion ; for it is to be presumed, if she
 “ is so accomplished, and so prudent as
 “ you would persuade me she is, she can-
 “ not be so mean as to give you encourage-
 “ ment, only with a design to deceive you
 “ at last. This is the only advice I can be
 “ able to give you ; for my visit to you
 “ this morning, was to take my leave of
 “ you.”

“ Where are you going ?”

“ I grow old, London does not agree
 “ with me ; this is the season for retiring
 “ into the country : I accept of a friend’s
 “ invitation, and am going to his house.”

“ What shall I do ? Whom can I trust to ?
 “ Whom shall I be advised by ? Whom can
 “ I repose such an unreserved confidence as
 “ in you ? Whose experienced and disinte-
 “ rested counsels shall guide and direct me,
 “ when you are gone ? At the moment I
 “ want a friend most, I am forsaken.
 “ When the dearest interests of my heart
 “ are

“are at stake, when the transactions of a
“moment may destroy the future happiness
“of my life, I have the greatest occasion
“for the assistance and advice of such a
“friend. It is very unfortunate for me,
“that you are obliged to go at this juncture.”

“I am sorry you think so: but consider
“that it is your friendship for me, makes
“you respect that counsel, which I might
“give you, so highly. My disappointments
“and misfortunes in life make me look
“upon things in a different light from the
“rest of mankind. Though I would endeavour
“to preserve the greatest probity in
“all my actions, though I would injure no
“man; yet the asperity of my remarks,
“and the sourness of my temper, make me
“shunned and hated by the generality of
“the world, who are either knaves or fools.
“How can I serve you then, who, in the
“meridian of youth and gaiety, are pursuing
“a lady, who by your account is

“wor-

"worthy of you. My suspicions, incident
 "to age, might throw bars in your way,
 "you could not overcome. If in pursu-
 "ance of my advice you took a wrong
 "step, and lost the woman you loved, you
 "would blame me for it. Besides, I can-
 "not enter into the spirit of an affair of
 "this kind: my blood is chilled by time,
 "and old age has silvered my hairs. That
 "which I might think the most likely me-
 "thod of securing you success, according
 "to my notion of things, would perhaps
 "be quite the reverse. And why do you
 "want advice? Are you ashamed to avow
 "that you have sense enough to prefer a
 "woman of beauty and understanding to
 "those who have none? Are you afraid
 "to acknowledge an honourable and vir-
 "tuous passion for a woman of merit? If
 "you are, you reason from false princi-
 "ples, and don't deserve her. You can
 "determine betwixt good and evil, and
 "know which you should follow. While
 "you

“you obey the dictates of justice and honour, though you may not meet all the success you merit, yet you will escape the reproaches of your own conscience, for having done what you ought not to do, and will have the happiness of being justified to yourself. That is the only advice I can give you.”

“I thank you, and I shall follow it. But will you not permit me to write to you?”

“You have prevented my requesting it—Yes certainly : and though I cannot write with the same facility as formerly, I will answer your letters sometimes, for you must not expect me to be a very punctual correspondent.”

The old gentleman gave me his address; and after assuring me of the regard he had for me, took leave of me in a very affectionate manner. Ah Thompson, he misrepresented himself : there is a great deal of humanity and benevolence in his composition, and he affects an austerity that is really

really foreign to him. He conceived a friendship for me: and he has merited all the return I can give him by the confidence he has reposed in me. I had not completed my dressing when Mr. Mannerley called upon me as he had promised. He told me he proposed that we should dine together if I was disengaged. I informed him I was, and we took a walk in the Park. Our conversation at dinner turned on a variety of subjects till the cloth was removed, and we were left to ourselves.

“ You have been a long time acquainted with the Grigby family.”

“ Yes,” replied he: “ I was educated in their neighbourhood, and have been known among them since I was a child. But my father was a man of a peculiar disposition, and would not suffer me to visit any of the neighbouring polite families. He confined me at home, prevented my acquiring any knowledge but that of the managemant of a farm, and

“ writing

“ writing receipts for the tenants. My
 “ principal dependance was on him, and I
 “ should have lost every thing if I had
 “ quarrelled with him. I lament the time
 “ I have mispent, but it is now too late
 “ to recall it. He died, and left me in
 “ possession of a very good estate, and not
 “ a farthing of debt upon it. I had seen
 “ Miss Conyers at Sir Marmaduke Grig-
 “ sby’s, and could not help loving her,
 “ but had not resolution enough to tell her
 “ so, till my father’s death made me my
 “ own master. However, she has been
 “ honest enough to inform me that she
 “ does not approve me, nor never can; has
 “ often entreated me to drop my suit, and
 “ be her friend, in which light she will
 “ ever esteem me. Though this was ex-
 “ tremely discouraging, yet I pursued her
 “ in hopes of her being more favourable
 “ to me some time or another: but all my
 “ labour has been fruitless.”

“ Was her fortune equal to yours? ”

“ If

“ If I can believe Sir Marmaduke, it is
 “ much superior to any thing I could
 “ expect. Her estate is very large, and
 “ it has been now accumulating for many
 “ years. The Baronet, though he has the
 “ care of her person, in right of his wife,
 “ who is Miss Conyers’s aunt, has got the
 “ management of her estate, which is in
 “ the hands of some other trustees, whom
 “ I am unacquainted with; but it is very
 “ remarkable that so good a fortune should
 “ be known so little, and the young lady
 “ herself kept in such obscurity.”

“ It is not common: but what can be
 “ the cause of it?”

“ I cannot tell, unless Sir Marmaduke
 “ has his own views in it, and will make
 “ the best terms he can with the person
 “ that marries her. I have reason to think
 “ that may be his design; for I was to give
 “ up a mortgage which my father had on
 “ the estate, in case I married her, and
 “ from thence I imagine sprung his great
 “ friendship

“friendship for me. Lady Grigsby takes
“Lord Averston’s part, and at last will
“persuade her husband to espouse his in-
“terest also: and then the poor young
“lady will be forced to marry him whe-
“ther she will or no.”

“You don’t believe then that she has
“any preference for him.”

“I cannot tell, though I believe not:
“but Lady Grigsby is a mere devil, and
“the poor creature would lead a dog’s
“life if she was to shew any aversion
“to his lordship. As for Sir Christopher
“Blackford, he is: a fool and a French-
“man, and I don’t wonder at her hating
“him; but Lord Averston is a very
“clever sensible man, and will carry his
“point if possible. Indeed the young
“lady never gave any of us encourage-
“ment: and as I can’t succeed with her,
“I’ll e’en take her advice, and give her
“up; for really she is too sensible for a
“wife.”

"wife for me, though I would make her
"as good an husband as I could."

"How long has she been under the care
"of this family?"

"From her infancy. Sir Marmaduke
"had an elder brother, who died without
"children, and he step'd, very unex-
"pectedly, into the title. But, Mr. Ben-
"son, as I have very openly told you my
"sentiments, will you tell me yours?"

"I will indeed. You suspect that I in-
"tend to pay my addresses to Miss Con-
"yers; you are right: I love her, I must
"avow it. Perhaps I may share the same
"fate that you have. But the experiment
"must be made."

"I wish thee success with all my heart,"
said he, shaking me by the hand, "for
"you're more of an Englishman than ei-
"ther of them, and I hope you may win
"her. I had heard of you before I saw
"you, and determined to be acquainted
"with you, to know your mind, for now
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“ my hopes are all over. I may give you
 “ some intelligence how the family is go-
 “ verned, and how you must proceed. Lord
 “ Averston is a long-headed fellow, and
 “ won’t stick at any thing. He always is
 “ against me, but I am glad of that, for
 “ I would not have him of the same way
 “ of thinking that I am. Lady Grigsby
 “ has been secured in his interest by some
 “ means or other, and I suppose it is sti-
 “ pulated that she shall be rewarded out of
 “ the young lady’s fortune. His lordship’s
 “ estate is a little out at elbows, and he
 “ wants to patch it up again.”

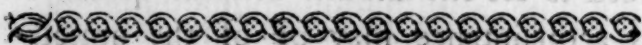
What a stroke to me, Thompson! But
 ere I was acquainted with these particu-
 lars, I will avow it, my heart was a slave to
 her beauty, my soul was the captive of
 her charms. I will detain you no longer
 with this conversation; let it suffice to ac-
 quaint you that I learned every thing from
 Mannersley that I wished to know, who
 added, that in her private character she was

as amiable as she was lovely in her person, and that all the world spoke loudly of her virtues. He assured me of his friendship, and the desire he had to be more intimate with me. I met him half way, and we agreed to see one another more frequently. His acquaintance may be of the utmost service to me in procuring even admission to this lady. What a jewel she is, and in what hands is she placed! Her guardians only wait for the opportunity of selling her to the best advantage. Wretched Matikla! to what dangers art thou exposed by those ungenerous people. It is an act of justice to deliver her out of their power: but that shall not be made a merit by me. If I can win her esteem it will be time enough to inform her then of what I know, but it would have the appearance of design to do it now. In the mean time Mannersley and I will watch them, and prevent their forcing her to what she has an aversion to. Happy should I be to protect her in the

hour of danger, to guard her from all harm, to ward even a giant's blow from her though it should crush me. Farewell.

Your's ever,

GEORGE BENSON.



LETTER. XLVIII.

TO MISS ATKINS.

I Thank my dear friend for the care of my family. They have been, till lately, all that I had to trouble me, all that I had occasion to concern myself about. The fatigue I suffered from the tiresome solicitations of men, whom I did not, nor could not regard, was rather troublesome than grievous; and Lady Grigby's importunity gave me uneasiness only while it lasted. I returned to my chamber with an heart as blythe as a bird. I was indifferent and contented. The momentary persecutions

I

I suf-

I suffered, only gave me an higher relish to the enjoyment of that pleasure and ease which I always found in my solitude. And there I shut out her ladyship, and with her every thought that was irksome or disagreeable. But I begin to seek retirement from her folly, only to indulge my own reflections, and find that I have lost that quiet and calmness that used formerly to heal every thing that was displeasing. I have lost that satisfaction and happiness I formerly enjoyed. Doubt and irresolution have taken possession of me; the breast, once so tranquil, is disturbed with cares; and the heart, once so gay, is heavy and melancholly. Whence can this change proceed? you will ask. I cannot well tell you, for I have not yet enquired into that cause, and I dread to investigate it. A young gentleman, of the name of Benson, had an opportunity of defending Lady Grigsby and me from some riotous servants at Ranelagh. He was a total stranger to me

before: 'tis true I had observed him in the room, but not with a very particular eye. Her Ladyship ran in raptures with his gallantry and politeness, though Lord Averston, who was with us, rather endeavoured to depreciate the action. Her talking so much of it made me think more of the person whom I was indebted to for my safety. The next day he called on us to know how we were after the fright that accident had thrown us into. I must own I was pleased when I heard his name announced, and saw him with other eyes than the preceding night. I admired his person: his address was pleasing, his manners were gentle. During the continuance of his visit, Lord Averston came in.—Would you believe it? he had the assurance to thank Mr. Benson in his own name, for the services he had rendered me. I liked him less than ever from that moment. Lady Grigsby, who is a professed admirer of every thing gallant and romantic,

tic, who has preserved the high-flown notions of the last age, and wishes to introduce them into this, pays great attention to Mr. Benson, whose polite and courteous behaviour in taking part with two strangers, makes him fit for the exalted rank of knight-errantry in her opinion, and she is happy whenever he calls on her. But what may give her pleasure occasions Lord Averston great uneasiness: for I have learn'd by accident, that he has reprehended her ladyship for encouraging this handsome stranger to visit her. But why should he be so arrogant as to prescribe to Lady Grigsby whom she ought to see, or must she ask his permission? Surely he has a great ascendancy over her, or he would not dare to talk in that manner to her. But though it was so contrary to Lord Averston's inclinations, yet Mr. Benson was not prevented from visiting her. But why should I be pleased or displeased at it? Oh Caroline, I ought to be ashamed of

myself! I have suffered this young man to make a deeper impression on me than I ought, without knowing him, without any acquaintance, nothing but the mere view; an apparent modesty and candour in his manner, that may be perhaps affected or assumed, and but for the purpose of imposing on me. Lord Averston has hinted many things to his prejudice, both with regard to his moral character, and his fortune; but I know his lordship too well to believe every thing he says, and am well convinced that he would soon bring proof of what he advances, if he could. Don't laugh at me, my sweet friend, for my earnestness—it is ridiculous, I must confess, for there is no cause why I should take the part of a person whom I am scarcely known to, and whom, perhaps, it may be a disgrace to have been only acquainted with. It will be so, beyond a doubt, if Lord Averston is to be credited. Then unhappy Matilda will be taught to know
sorrow,

forrow, her heart will be punished for its folly. But the case may be otherwise, and I may have cause to rejoice at the choice that I have spontaneously made. He may prove worthy, and I may be blessed. Yet, Caroline, yet my senses wander. Ah! he never told me that he ever wished for me. He is cold and silent. But yet I thought, or endeavoured to think, that his behaviour at the play, the other night, to which he conducted and accompanied Lady Grigsby and me, spoke something more than friendship. They have been a long time endeavouring, in vain, to teach me the lesson of love. I have been obliged to remark the various stages and symptoms of that passion, whether real or pretended, in my several admirers, and in none more than Lord Averston. Do not wonder at my skill then, nor be surprised when I tell you, that Mr. Benson's eyes spoke a language I very easily understood. Oh Caroline! his eyes speak indeed, and if truly, I shall be

happy. Mr. Mannersley was of our party, by Mr. Benson's invitation. How frequently did I make comparisons between them, and every one only heightened the good opinion I had conceived of Mr. Benson. But in the midst of the delusive scenes of pleasure my foolish imagination has formed, my reason gives me a severe check, and shews me the imprudence of indulging my wishes, until I have some sure foundation for placing my esteem. Yet why should I be censured? I know that the persons who are soliciting my hand, have a greater view to my fortune: the consequence is, that being in the disposal of my uncle and Mr. Daubigny, till I shall be of age, they are bribing the former to get at me, without materially concerning themselves about me, though it is necessary to carry on an appearance. What then am I to be condemned for—placing my regard on a man whom I think to be the most amiable of his sex: if he should
approve

approve himself what he appears to be, I can give him a fortune that may exceed his utmost hopes. If he is not, however great the sacrifice may be, I am determined never to think more of him. Am I to blame for attempting to render myself happy when others are endeavouring to make me miserable? Oh Caroline, it is but a new, a recent impression that is made in my heart; and yet I am able to describe to myself all the pleasures that can attend the union of two persons mutually enamoured, and can tremble with horror at the thoughts of being forced to receive a man as an husband, whom I must detest. This love makes us apt scholars. But I have no one to advise me, none to direct me. If not subjected to a father's authority, I have the misfortune to want the counsel and tenderness of a mother, whom I could consult with, who would direct me, and point out the road I should follow or shun. My guardians assume the power without

the tenderness, and if not snatched out of their hands I shall fall a sacrifice to their ambition or avarice. It is true, Mr. Daubigny's authority is superior to theirs: but he has convinced me, by so many reasons, that I should not quit Sir Marmaduke's family, on account of my own character, shewing me at the same time his regard for my interest, and his determination to serve me. But at that time Sir Marmaduke had not those views he has at present, nor was Lady Grigsby acquainted with Lord Averston. They have not power to force me to marry whom they please, but they may remove me from him I like. Nor can I always open my heart to Mr. Daubigny, or acquaint him with my sentiments. Modesty and shame will prevent my disclosing my weakness to a man, though he is so old, and so truly my friend. Were he to know the wanderings of my heart, perhaps he would despise me; for we cannot tell how the other sex think, or would judge

judge of our actions. I will endeavour to regulate mine by the rules of propriety as far as I can. Never will I deviate willingly from them. But it is not always that we have prudence enough to follow them closely; our passions come in, and carry us away in spite of ourselves. They will tell you that contradiction, especially with a woman, only makes her more fond of sticking to her point. The superiority Lord Averston appears to assume is intolerable. He had been absent for three days, and gave me a most agreeable respite. In that time I had been with Mr. Benson at the play. He had heard of it by some means or another, I am sure; for his looks shewed the anger of his heart, though he gave us leave to inform him of the circumstance. Indeed Lady Grigsby did that soon after his appearance, and ran out in raptures with Mr. Benson as usual. His lordship did not conceive himself much obliged to her for praising him thus,

and

and told her so by one or two very significant looks.

"But I hope, Madam," said he, addressing me, "that you were entertained."

"Greatly, indeed, my lord."

"With the play, or the company?" demanded he, with an insulting sneer.

"Both, my lord; for Mr. Benson's sensible remarks encreased the pleasure of the entertainment."

This struck him dumb for a little time, and I am sure must have chagrined him prodigiously. After a little recollection he burst forth.

"Well, it is very odd, that among all the people I know, and with all the enquiries I make, I cannot find out who that young fellow is."

"It does not signify," replied Lady Grigsby; "he is a very handsome fellow, and a very genteel one. He keeps good company, and now a-days people are not very nice, especially with the men."

"The

"The ladies may not," returned his lordship, highly piqued; "but your ladyship will permit us to be so. Though I must own, I cannot see but it affects a woman as much to be seen intimate, or frequently in public, with a man of a doubtful character, as with one of her own sex who is so."

"True, my lord," said I, assisting Lady Grigsby; "but there are so many things which may affect the character of a man, and which have only their existence in opinion, that a body must be an excellent casuist to distinguish who is fit company for one or not. There is only one point in a woman's character to be observed; and let her only adhere to that, and she is universally admitted. But a man, who may, to the greater part of the world, seem a valuable and respectable member of society, yet to your men of nice honour he may be ridiculous and despicable."

" I

“I cannot pretend to support my arguments against such able advocates, and if you are determined to defend him, ladies, I must yield ; but should be glad that you were better informed whose part you take with such earnestness. If I can give you any lights, I will.”

His lordship did not stay long after this conversation, which was not very agreeable to him. When he was gone, Lady Grigsby renewed her praises of his lordship to me, trumpeted forth the advantages of the match, extolled his good qualities, and diminished his bad ones. She would have gone on as long as I had patience to hear her, had it been all night ; but I cut the harangue short, by retiring to my chamber. Had she been as eloquent upon another subject, perhaps I might have indulged her with my company a little longer. I confess to you, my friend, Lady Grigsby's conduct puzzles me. What she can mean by praising Mr. Benson before Lord Averston,

ston, and yet taking his part with such constant perseverance when he is absent? I cannot tell, unless she means to enhance the price of her services to his Lordship. Farewell.

MATILDA CONYERS.



L E T T E R XLIX.

To the same.

EITHER Lord Averston, has found out something extremely prejudicial to Mr. Benson's character, or else he has persuaded my aunt that he has; for she drops some extraordinary hints, of the impropriety of keeping company with persons one knows nothing of; that many a genteel person in appearance, may in reality be sharpers and rogues; that she has been imposed on, in spite of her experience and knowledge of the world; and that it is impossible

impossible for every one's character to be known at once. These are oblique reflections on Mr. Benson. She speaks of him now with contempt, nor will she give any reason why she does so. I fear to ask her, lest she should imagine I had any peculiar esteem for him, and for that reason, do all in her power to deprive me of the opportunity of seeing him. I am convinced from my knowledge of Lord Averston's principles, that he would stick at nothing to get rid of a man whom he seems to fear, and whom he suspects to be so much more in my esteem, than he himself is; he may therefore invent falsehoods to prejudice him, but he may also tell truth; indeed I confess it looks odd for a man, who has the appearance of a gentleman, to be unknown to all the world almost. If he could be found out to be what he is represented, it would ease my heart of many a pang it now feels. He has not been here lately: sure

if he had the good opinion of me I thought his eyes told me he had, he could not have been absent so long. Perhaps he is conscious of his situation, and his want of those qualifications which should entitle him to address me, either with respect to his private character, or the honesty of his designs; and from an extraordinary sensibility, will not render me liable to censure, by endeavouring to make me think well of him, or will not chuse to undergo the mortification of a repulse, which the explanation of his views and his character must certainly bring on. Perhaps he may be every thing that could be wish'd, and yet the terror of Lord Averston makes him cautious. But if he was a lover, he should despise difficulties. Perhaps he imagines that, by the self-sufficient airs his Lordship gives himself, that we are engaged, and that it will be impossible to prevent our union. Should he not enquire? Should he not attempt

attempt to know what chance he stood if he had any inclination to address me? Ah Caroline! sweet Caroline! I have deceived myself. I fancied the effects of civility were the beginning of affection, and my own self-love has led me into a fatal error. I have indulged the delusion till it appeared a reality, and my sanguine imagination has made shadows substances. But I shall be punished for my folly: the dream has vanish'd, and I awake only to be sensible of the pleasures I enjoyed in the temporary deceit, and to feel the misery of my situation. It is the misfortune of our sex to love those who regard us not, while we are pursued in vain by those who feel the same passion for us, and suffer equally from the flights we shew them. How wretched am I! an orphan, possessed of those things which the world says constitutes happiness; yet without the power of enjoying or disposing of them in the manner I could wish; in the hands of
those

those who delight to torment me, or who hope to profit by the sale of me. I cannot help myself, I cannot be redress'd; my woes would appear to others ideal, tho' to me they are certain and real. What a dismal prospect I have before me! But how bright would it be, if I could repose a confidence in the man whom my heart made the election of, and whom experience gave me a proof of his virtues. But I fear, that the first wish I ever form'd is for a person who is either unworthy or insensible. These are melancholy reflections, and I would not indulge them if I could help it; but they recur in spite of me.



I resume my pen again, my dear friend, for my writing was interrupted by a message from Mrs. Clinton and her daughter; a sweet girl, Caroline, and one whom only to know is to love. It was a fine evening, and they proposed going to Vauxhall, if Lady Grigsby and I would accompany

company them. I must own to you, I was not displeased at being prevented from indulging the melancholy thoughts that had taken possession of me, at the time I was interrupted. One disagreeable reflection led on another, and the train was too long to think on without horror. It was necessary to fly to dissipation to amuse them, and divert my attention to something else. I embraced the proposal: and my aunt went with me out of compliment, though she appeared averse to the party, and seemed rather inclined to stay at home. The first object that struck my eyes upon entering the gardens was Mr. Benson; he was along with Lady Bab Alton, a woman of quality, and the fine gentlemen all agree that she is a fine woman too, but I can't think so. I had an opportunity of observing him unperceiv'd. My confusion at first would not permit me to take as particular notice as I wish'd, but when I came to look at him

him more narrowly, I thought his face wore a gloom of melancholy, that said I to myself, may arise from her treating him scornfully; for Lady Bab is a coquet. Yet she appear'd to be very familiar with him. It pain'd me to see her, though I had concluded his heart might be attached to her. But I was surprized to see him unmoved by her familiarities, and his eye wandering from one thing to another, as if he search'd for what he could not find. Though it did not please me in one shape to see him with Lady Bab, yet it gave me a satisfaction in another, to find him in her company, as it would be an answer to my aunt's objections to him. For that purpose, I determined to let her see him, and altering the course of our walk, instead of following him, we went the other way and met him. It was impossible for him to pass by us unnoticed. He saw me, and his countenance expressed manifest confusion: he had scarcely recol-
lection

collection to salute us as he passed by. There was something odd in that, as I reasoned with myself; for what cause should he be ashamed to see me, if he has not endeavoured to persuade me to have a good opinion of him, while his heart was attached to another? the consciousness of his own baseness, causes shame, perhaps remorse. For what have I to say to him? He wanted to deceive me, and he is shocked at being found out. These considerations employed me, while Fanny Clinton and I were walking along with her brother, followed at a little distance by Mr. and Mrs. Clinton, and Lady Grigsby. My thoughts were taken up with endeavouring to reconcile this behaviour to myself; and I was silent in spite of my companions attempts to rouse me? On a sudden Mr. Benson presented himself at my elbow. I turned to see who pressed so close on me, and started at seeing him so near. The usual compliments passed,

passed, when he congratulated me on appearing abroad.

I informed him I had not been ill. He replied, that he had been extremely apprehensive and uneasy, for he had called three or four times at Sir Marmaduke's, and that we had been denied to him every time, and he imagined illness might occasion his not being admitted, especially, as Lady Grigby's politeness had given him such frequent invitations. This account gave me uneasiness; I demanded when he had been there: and he informed me of particular times, when I was conscious of being at home; this shewed me that we were both deceived. However, I could not venture to tell him the truth, but contented myself with saying, that I was sorry he had been so often disappointed, for that my aunt, I doubted not, would be always glad to see him. I concluded by entreating him, not to let us detain him from his company.

“ Ah Miss Conyers,” replied he, with an expressive tone of voice, “ I came here on purpose to seek for you. I was miserable at being so long deprived of your presence, and I found your doors barred against me. Having the honour of being known to Lady Bab Alton, she asked me concerning some of our mutual acquaintances ; she is resting herself in the rotunda ; and if you will permit me to be of your party, it will make me very happy for the rest of the evening.” I assured him his company would be very agreeable : But was sorry to take him away from Lady Bab. “ Ah,” replied he, in a low voice, “ If you knew, Miss Conyers, how unhappy I have been at not being permitted to see you so long, you would indulge me with the pleasure of being in your company ; for be assured that of all the world I——”

We

wa

We were obliged to separate, by meeting some ladies, and before he could join me again; when I turned my head towards him, the odious Lord Averston, had taken his place. You cannot conceive my chagrin and disappointment: I was mortified to the last degree. The conclusion of the sentence Benson had just began, would have explained his sentiments, cleared my doubts, and given ease to my heart, which had been filled with a thousand uneasy sensations. Instead of listening with pleasure to Benson, I was forced to attend to Lord Averston, who gave a pompous account of himself, and the expedition he made in following us to the gardens, assuring me that he could not be happy out of my sight. I scarcely repaid all this trouble with a civil answer. He seemed shocked at my treatment of him: Benson's looks plainly shewed how severe he thought this interruption was. Little did he know that my heart

sympathized with his, and that I was as uneasy at Lord Averston's appearance as he was: however, there was no getting rid of him. Benson saw that, and after some fruitless attempts, to speak to me, politely took his leave, and joined his former party. Though he had explained his former acquaintance with Lady Bab, yet I was not easy at seeing them together; Lord Averston could not help expressing some surprise at it: for his appearing in company with her Ladyship, and her party gave him a sanction, in Lord Averston's eyes, and removed the objections that he had formed before. If my heart was a little easier than it had been; yet it was not fully resolved: and though I had every reason to believe, that Mr. Benson had conceived a regard for me, yet I wanted to be put out of suspense.

Thus deprived of the company I most wished for, the evening was spent in a disagreeable manner to me. Fanny Clinton, whose

whose good sense and penetration nothing can escape, rallied me on the visible alteration in my countenance when Lord Averston came in Mr. Benson's room. The little civility I shewed his Lordship confirmed her suspicions, and I was obliged to bear her jokes. I was determined the next day to hint to Lady Grigsby, that there was no necessity for denying me if she chose not to be at home herself. As this might have drawn an explanation from her Ladyship, it was really a step that would have been prudent: but I was prevented. Mr. Mannersly, and Sir Christopher Blackford, were both at the breakfast-table. This early visit surprised me, for it was very unusual. They both appeared very grave, and even Sir Christopher's levity had forsaken him. When the breakfast was over, they all retired, and left the Baronet with me. He began to address me in his formal fulsome manner: and after assuring me of the sincerity of his passion, and many more things.

things equally important, he told me Sir Marmaduke had informed him that I had made my determination in favour of Lord Averston, and that he came to receive his final dismissal from my own mouth. This speech astonished me.

“ I assure you, Sir Christopher, that
“ Sir Marmaduke has told you this out of
“ his own head entirely ; for I have never
“ made any such determination in favour
“ of Lord Averston, nor ever shall if I
“ hold my present manner of thinking ;
“ but, I must repeat to you at the same
“ time, what I have often mentioned before,
“ that, as it is impossible for me to make
“ you that return which you expect and
“ deserve, I would not wish you to waste
“ your time on me.”

He began to compliment me. Odious Sir Christopher ! I was forced really to behave rudely to him, before I could persuade him I was in earnest. But this was not the only mortification which I was
doomed

doomed to suffer that day. Mr. Mannerley attacked me when he was gone, just in the same manner: but he told me he was very sorry to hear I was going to be married to Lord Averston. He confessed that not believing himself deserving of me, he had given up all thoughts of gaining me. But that though he was so unfortunate, yet there was another person who admired me, and whom he looked upon as more deserving of me. That he wished me extremely well, and therefore did not desire to see me Lady Averston. I thanked him for his good wishes, as well as for the opinion he entertained of me, much too great for my deserts. Assured him that I had no thoughts of Lord Averston; and hinted that I wished to have no other admirers as he called them, as I had been made sufficiently uneasy by the partiality of those who had already declared in my favour.

“Nay,” said he, “you will not be displeased when you come to know who it

“is. It is one you’ll like—You know
“Mr. Benson—Ah! I knew you would be
“glad.”

The blood, which mounted involuntarily into my face, shewed my feelings at the mention of his name: foolish girl! that has not acquired art enough so long as thou hast lived in the great and polite world, to suppress the effects of shame, and disguise the sentiments of thy heart. Mr. Mannersley increased my confusion, by telling me that I need not be afraid, for he would not tell Mr. Benson, though he was sure it would make him jump out of his skin for joy. This, instead of calming, increased my confusion. My aunt, who entered that moment, took notice of it.

“Ah Matilda, what has Mr. Mannersley done to make you so uneasy?”

“Nothing in the world, my lady, but
“telling her of a new conquest she has
“made.”

“Aye

"Aye indeed, and who can that be?"

This question, so mal-apropos, disconcerted me beyond measure. I would have prevented his telling, if I could; but that would have given such grounds to the hopes of Mr. Benson, if ever it had reached his ears, that he must have concluded me a very forward one indeed: but had I been inclined to have acted thus, Mr. Mannersley was so ready to let Lady Grigsby into the secret, that my labour had been in vain.

"Oh, it is only Mr. Benson, my lady."

"Mr. Benson! I wonder how such a thing could come into your head, Mr. Mannersley."

"How does it come into the head of a fine young man to love a fine young woman? I was, and am very fond of her still, but she won't have any thing to say to me, and that's the way it came into my head."

“Do you know this Mr. Benson, Mr. Mannerley?”

“No, I can’t say as I do much: but what I do is, that he is a very honest young fellow, and a true Englishman, none of your macaronies.”

“You had better take care of him then, if you do’nt know him, for perhaps you may suffer by him.”

“How! ’Zounds, how can I suffer by him?”

“There are many ways of making you know him better. He is not the most reputable companion in the world for a gentleman.”

“Why, what has he done?”

“It does not become me to say: but I suppose the reputation of my niece’s fortune has brought him hither, and he is expecting to profit by his handsome person, and genteel address.”

“I don’t believe a word of it: and the person that told you so has more
4 “designs

“ designs in his head than you have, or he
“ either.—It is no such thing.”

“ You might pay a greater compliment
“ to me, Sir, than contradict me so plainly:
“ but I know it very well, Sir.”

“ Nay, if your ladyship is angry, I can’t
“ help it: but I don’t see what cause you
“ have to fly in a passion, because I only
“ speak my mind.”

“ Indeed, Sir, you assume a consequence
“ upon your intimacy here, which I ima-
“ gined a man of politeness would never
“ have thought of: and though I cannot
“ help your insulting me in my own house,
“ yet I can advise my niece to take care of
“ herself, and not let her fortune become
“ the prey of a greedy adventurer.”

“ Well, my lady, you may say what you
“ please of him, but he is not like a man
“ of that kind.”

How long this dispute, to which I lis-
tened with silent satisfaction, would have
lasted, I know not, if it had not been in-

interrupted by the entrance of Miss Clinton. The dear girl relieved me from a most disagreeable and embarrassing situation. I went up with her to my chamber, and when we came down stairs again my aunt was alone : how long Mr. Mannersley staid with her I know not, but she was much incensed against him. In the small time I was alone with Miss Clinton, she found means to congratulate me on my conquest, as she called it; and I had an opportunity of expressing my doubts concerning him, and informed her of what I had heard of him. She has an almost universal acquaintance, and will find out from Lady Bab Alton what he is. This will be a great ease to me, and give me liberty to judge for myself. The moment I can find leisure I intend to attack my aunt for the report which she has spread of my having determined in favour of Lord Averston. Then you shall hear again from me, for I fear you have full enough of this letter.

Adieu

LORD STANTON. 205

Adieu my sweet friend, and ever believe
me yours, most effectually,

MATILDA CONYERS.



LETTER XLI.

TO WILLIAM ROGERS, Esquire.

I Can compare a lady's chambermaid,
dear Rogers, to nothing better than
Milton's description of the devil, couch'd
at the ear of Eve under the similitude of a
toad. She is in a capacity either to listen,
or to inform; to watch her opportunity
when to soothe, when to terrify, when to
persuade, when to alarm. There is no-
thing which an artful sensible girl cannot
do with her mistress, when she is properly
tutored and instructed. I have no doubt
of reaping benefit from the trouble I have
taken with Mrs. Betty, who is the angelic
Matilda's humble attendant. Ever ready

and

and attentive to my service, she can watch her humours; and taking the advantage of her softer, looser moments, if such a woman can be supposed to relax a moment, perhaps do me the most essential service. I also see now that a small reward and a great deal of expectation answers much better, and causes more diligence, than when, by your bounty, you may deprive them of any future hopes. But to explain myself with more regularity. Seeing the charming Matilda every day, put me in Tantalus's situation. The fruit was bobbing at my lips, and I could not get hold of it. A life of abstinence and mortification was not made for me: and it was impossible to support the wicked thoughts that the continual presence of the lovely Matilda could not fail to inspire. Matters were in a good situation, as I thought: and a kind female honoured me with her company to my little box in the forest, where

where we spent three days together,

In extacies too fierce to last for ever.

I must own to you I was afraid of remaining in London, the scene of action, lest some envious fiend should carry the tale to the spotless maid, and the report of my libertinism might give her a cause to reject me. If she knew but all, I think I have sacrificed sufficiently to her already: but nothing will serve these sanctified ones, unless you give up every thing. These I have given up, wine, dice, and women, I was going to say. My servant, on my return, informed me, that mistress Betty had sent to him to know where I was, and that she would come and speak to me, as she had something important to communicate. A message was immediately dispatched, and she promised to meet with me in the morning. This desire of seeing me, I thought foreboded no good. But I am a philosopher,

pher, and take things as they come. In the morning she was at my bedside.

“Well, Betty, what news?”

“Oh, your lordship, I am very sorry
“your lordship was out of the way, for
“my mistress has been to the playhouse
“with Mr. Benson, and she did nothing
“else but talk of him when she came
“home.”

“That’s rather a bad sign.”

“Yes; and though I frequently told
“her that your lordship was the hand-
“somest, and the better man, yet she would
“not mind me.”

This was the principal part of the intelligence she had to communicate, and was obliged to hasten home before her mistress stirred. I could only give her some general instructions for her behaviour, and promise to call at the Baronet’s myself in the morning. I found Lady Grigsby alone, and had such an opportunity of talking properly to her, that she has given orders

to

to the porter to deny this dangerous rival of mine. Matilda herself received me with as much coolness as usual: but if I am not mistaken, I shall bring down that haughty air. The foolish girl, in order to serve me, drew me into comparison with this young fellow, while Matilda's imagination was yet heated with the warm ideas he had raised there. I could not avoid suffering, however superior I might be: but I have already confessed to you, that he is really handsome and genteel, and that these personal accomplishments do more with the women than any thing else. It is a sentiment I have met with in some author, that "a woman generally prefers the man whose sense does not lay in his head, to him whose sense does lie in his head." Nothing was ever more true, therefore he is most to be feared.

The consequence of my obtaining an order from Lady Grigsby to have Benson denied, was the pleasure I received from his

his mortification at not being admitted, when he had every reason to think they were at home. My Robert is an excellent fellow, trusty, and cunning; him I sent to get acquainted with Mr. Benson's servant: but he could not engage him to drink with him till a few nights ago, though Robert scraped acquaintance with him from the time his master first made his appearance at Sir Marmaduke's. However artful Robert was, Benson's servant, an old hand I imagine, was too many for him: and though he made him so drunk that he could tell nothing but the truth, all he could get out of him was, "that his master was not what he seemed." This I believed before, and therefore it was a useless piece of intelligence to me; however, it gave me some foundation to build an accusation against him to Lady Grigby, and that I did not fail to do. It had a proper weight with her ladyship, and with some little promises I confirmed her in my interest.

However,

However, there is something extraordinary in the silence of the servant, and the equivocal account he gave. I cannot help comparing it to the conversation between Archer and the highwayman in the *Beaux Stratagem*. We are each of us afraid of being discovered ourselves, yet willing to find out each other. If I am not much mistaken in my man, I'll throw him out yet : but I must take some pains, for he is extremely vigilant, or Fortune favours him, for I had seen Matilda in the morning, and left her, as I imagined, fixed for the day, and in the dumps, pouting at the sight of me, and being hindered from contemplating her admirer, who is more favoured than I am. These poutings, which are the effects of stee virtue, as she would have us believe, must be particularly delightful in a wife. To be sure Matilda is a very fine girl, and a very sensible girl, has a good fortune, and I should be very glad to call her Lady Averston ; but
if

if those glum looks, those pretty indications of a sweet temper, make their appearances, instead of a month, I should not live with her a fortnight in peace. But I must sing small with her at present. In spite of all those cold airs and freezing looks, which she puts on, I find a pretty fellow can thaw her ice, and make her sigh after him. Why not for me, for I think I am not less deserving than Mr. Benson? But pardon my digression. I told you, that in my opinion, she was in the dumps, and fix'd at home for a day. I was mistaken egregiously: for calling in the evening to have a sober party with the old lady, I found they were all gone to Vauxhall. It was not proper they should be there without me, and I set out after them with all possible expedition. Great as my haste was, I did not arrive a moment too soon. Their backs were to me as I entered, for I soon perceived them. Benson was in close conversation with Matilda,

tilda, and her aunt at some distance behind. A lucky accident separated Benson and his mistress, and I popped in between them. It is impossible for you to conceive their mortification and confusion. Their faces shewed how much they were disgusted and disappointed at my actions and presence. Matilda would hardly speak to me, but I obliged her lover to decamp. He could have no further opportunity of entertaining her, and was forced to join his company, which was much better than I thought he was acquainted with, and was composed of people of fashion. Matilda artfully made me take notice of it, by asking me who those were with whom Mr. Benson was walking? and as I could not disguise the truth, I informed her. This was the only appearance of a conversation that we kept up together that night. She treated me most scurvily, Rogers; but I will be even with her for it, or say that I am any thing you will please to call me,

however

however mean or despicable. I took care to have an hour's conversation with Lady Grigsby that night: and this day Sir Christopher Blackford and Mr. Mannersley have been dismissed, as Lady Grigsby has declared that Matilda has declared in my favour. I have also secured a retreat in the country, for the young lady, who must not be indulged in the sight of her favourite as often as she wishes. Matters were growing serious, Rogers, and I thought it better to crush them at once, than let them run on too far: but to effect this, I have been obliged to offer all I have, or rather set my last stake. I am well convinced that Sir Marmaduke did not assist Mr. Mannersley for nothing. He expected some *douceurs*. Indeed her ladyship hinted as much. I had lost some trifling sums to her at cards, and had promised a great deal, which with her natural partiality for me, made her of my party. But it was necessary, at least,

that

that some decisive stroke should be made, as well to prevent Matilda's throwing away her fortune upon this young fellow, as to enable me the sooner to get at her. The only way I knew, was to remove her from the place where she is in such hourly danger, and take her into the country; where I shall change my mode of address, and appear the whining humble lover, instead of the haughty lord. All her other admirers are sent off: for my intentions are to turn the siege into a blockade, and starve her into compliance. It is true, the uncle and aunt have given me all the assistance in their power, but that I have been obliged to purchase. Sir Marmaduke's hobby-horse is a feat in the house: when he is mounted, he goes on, as Tristram Shandy describes, gallopping through thick and thin, spattering every body near him, whether friend or foe. I have a borough yet at my command. The Baronet is apprehensive, and not without just cause, that

he

he shall not be returned again for the seat he now fills. I have proposed, and the proposal has been accepted, to return him, if he will procure me Matilda: but the bargain is, no purchase, no pay. As they seem pretty sure of commanding the bias of her inclinations which way they please, they embraced this proposal with joy; whilst I enhanced the favour, by proving to them how much I should disoblige the Minister, and my friends, by bringing in a man of a contrary interest; but that my love for Matilda was so great, that I would do any thing, however incompatible with my own views in life, to obtain her. This has succeeded with them: and Miss Conyers sets out for the Baronet's seat to-morrow, without knowing a word of the matter. In the mean time I shall not be idle. Before I pursue her, which will be in a day or two, I shall throw Benson off the scent. Then I fly to languish at Matilda's feet, to try all the arts of soft persuasion, and de-

deceive her into happiness. She is a type of the land flowing with milk and honey, and 'I must, I will possess her;' I will not offend the goddess of chance so much as an ancient General did, who affirmed fortune had no share in his success, and from that time it was observed he was never successful afterwards; lest his punishment should attend me, I will not say so much: but it is no crime to confess, I am endeavouring to put it out of fortune's power to hurt me. If she should, I should be worse off than the General, for the most grievous of all defeats would be to lose Matilda. Why are you silent? Let me hear from you. Farewell.

AVERSTON.

LETTER LI.

TO ROBERT ASCILL Esq.

YOU see that your removal into the country, cannot exempt you from my persecution. The friendship you profess for me, and the regard you have ever shewn me, induce me to become troublesome to you: but the permission you gave me to write to you, and the promise of corresponding with me, make me begin early to demand a performance of it. Let me claim a continuance of your esteem, if I shall deserve it; and let me benefit by your advice, which will ever regulate my conduct. Indeed, I am in such a situation now, that counsel I fear can do me but little good; for I am involved in doubts, and plunged in troubles. You left me, my dear friend, with my heart filled with the image of the lovely Matilda. I had the happiness of accompanying

nying her to a play: the opportunity of being near her, touching her hand, and beholding her beauties more closely, but served to increase my flame. I thought too, she looked more complacently on me. But, willing to improve this apparent good opinion she might have of me, I went to her uncle's house to pay my complements, but was informed the Ladies were abroad. This was natural, and I suspected nothing. I called the next day, and they were also abroad; the third time they were indisposed. Then, first, I began to conceive that they were denied to me, and that I was not to expect any future admittance. My heart died away at the thought. I recalled every transaction to my memory, wherein I had been concerned with the family, and could not recollect that I had offended any of them, or could have merited so shocking and mortifying a repulse. Various were the reflections which occu-

pieced my imagination. Perhaps Matilda, willing to get rid of me, might have refused to see me: perhaps Lady Grigby might have been prevailed on to deny me admittance, at the suggestion of some rival. All was doubt, confusion and misery. But unless I could get it cleared up by some means, it would always be so; and there was no possibility of seeing her at home: the most dreadful certainty, was not worse or more tormenting than the state in which we lived. They were frequently at the public places, and I attended every one, in hopes of meeting them, and having an opportunity of knowing from themselves the cause of my repulse. But even in that I was for a long time unfortunate: At length I found them at Vauxhall, and addressed Matilda. Judge my surprise when she told me that she wondered at not having seen me for so long a time. This convinced me, there had been some underhand work in the matter, which

which I determined to have cleared up; and had just began an explanation, when Lord Averston's presence interrupted me. He got close to Miss Conyers, nor was I able to speak to her again all that evening. The few words that passed between us nevertheless, served to clear matters up a little. It gave me infinite satisfaction to find, that it was not her desire that I should be refused. Nay, she appeared surprised when I mentioned it. This behaviour re-inspired me with hopes, and buoyed up my sinking spirits. I determined to call at Sir Marmaduke's in a day or two, as I would give her leave to clear up this mistake with her aunt; and to take no sort of notice, that I had been ever there before without seeing them. Thou hast loved, and the effect that passion caused has not escaped thy memory. A man in love, like him who is drowning, catches at a rush; the smallest incident in his favour elates him be-

yond description, the contrary depresses him as much. This declaration from Matilda's own mouth, that she knew nothing of the repulses I had met with, filled me with rapture : nor could the unseasonable interruption of Lord Averston, however mortifying it was, prevent me from indulging the most sanguine hopes, and giving a loose to the violence of my passion. Indeed, in my own imagination I had surmounted the greatest difficulties, and had traced the plan for attaining the height of my wishes. I was preparing to set out for Sir Marmaduke's, my heart overflowing with love and rapture : hastening to see her, my soul loved, ' expectation stood on tiptoe.' In that moment, in the midst of the fond enjoyments of Ideal happiness, Lord Averston, was announc'd.

" Lord Averston ! you must mistake."

" No, Sir, his carriage is at the door."

I stepped to the window, and my eyes convinced me of the truth.

"I am at home, shew him up."

In this interval, between this message and his seeing me, I was exceedingly puzzled to find out the cause of his visit. He saluted me with great politeness, at entering: but I could observe a concern in his countenance, and he seemed disturbed. He seated himself, and I pressed him to take some refreshment. He refused any, and the servant retired.

"Pray," said he with some emotion, "have you been lately at Sir Marmaduke Grigsby's, Mr. Benson?"

"No my Lord, I have not been there for some time past."

"Nor have not you seen Miss Conyers lately?"

"Your Lordship saw her more lately than I did, for I left her with you in Vauxhall gardens."

“Heaven and earth,” exclaimed he with an air of distraction, “what can be the meaning of this ! “You will excuse my troubling you with these questions, Sir,” continued he, addressing himself to me ; “as you are a gentleman whom I am so little acquainted with, but whom, nevertheless, I wish to be better known to, and whom I should be glad of an opportunity to serve. Yet though unhappily a stranger to you, a man of your humanity, and good-nature, will pity and excuse this trouble, which an unfortunate lover occasions ; you have heard I doubt not, and all the world is acquainted with my long and sincere attachment to the amiable Miss Conyers. Oh Sir, if you were as happy as I have been with her, you would, like me, feel her loss.”

This speech alarm'd me. All my apprehensions were roused, and yet I knew not what to fear. Lord Averston paused, as to give vent to the sorrows that oppressed

pressed him. He might have remained in silence to this hour, without my being able to break through it by asking him a question.

“I see, Sir,” said he, resuming the discourse, “that you who are only an acquaintance cannot help being concerned for me; but to lose those charms which I had so often called my own! These transports are troublesome, Sir, I will avoid them. I had overcome her coyness, and we were to have been united. Sir Marmaduke was ever against the match, as he and I differ in our political opinions. I supposed you must have observed *that*, in the few visits you made at his house, when you have seen us both together. As Miss Conyers is yet under her guardian’s power, he can controul her person, but not her inclinations. He has made use of his authority to distress me, and endeavour to alienate his ward’s affections from me. When I called there this morning to pay my com-

“pliments to Miss Conyers, I was informed
“that they were gone out of town, but
“where, no account could be given. This
“astonished, nay, confounded me ; I knew
“not where to go to, or to whom to ap-
“ply. In my distraction I came to you, if
“possible to learn the cause of their flight,
“or where they are gone to : not doubting,
“but if you knew, that your kindness
“would induce you to compassionate an
“unhappy lover, and lend your assistance,
“to rescue a Lady from such oppression
“and cruelty. It is not entirely on my own
“account either, but for what Miss Con-
“yers may suffer, that I feel—That dear
“girl, I can judge of her distress by my
“own, and so well acquainted with her
“sentiments as I am, can form an idea of
“her torment, at this unexpected, this me-
“lancholy separation. It is too much to
“bear.”

The tears gathered in his eyes as he
spoke : one trickled down his cheek, he
per-

perceived it, and endeavoured to hide it with his handkerchief; then rose and walked to the window to conceal his emotions and recollect himself: at length he recovered pretty well, and resumed his seat again.

“ This account, my Lord, surprises me,
 “ as much as you can be. I was so
 “ far from being privy to a circumstance
 “ of this nature, that had I not been in-
 “ terrupted by this visit your Lordship has
 “ honoured me with, I should have been
 “ there before this time. I can assure you
 “ upon my honour, that I knew nothing
 “ of the matter till you inform’d me of
 “ it.”

“ Sir, I have no reason to doubt of
 “ your sincerity, I am convinced: but
 “ perhaps, though the place of their re-
 “ treat is kept secret from me, it may be
 “ no mystery to you or any body else,
 “ who are not the objects of Sir
 “ Marmaduke’s resentment. Let me en-

“ treat you therefore to pursue your intentions of going there, and if you should be so lucky as to discover where they are retired to, or rather where Miss Conyers has been forced to, I shall beg it as the greatest favour you can possibly confer on me, to let me know it.”

“ You may depend on it, Lord Averston.”

“ Then I will not delay you, as my life almost hangs on your being successful. Will you give me leave to set you down any where: my carriage is at the door.”

I refused his offer, and he took leave of me, pressing me with great appearance of cordiality to call on him at his house. When he was gone, I had leisure to reflect on the conversation which had just passed. How distracted were my thoughts! how miserable were my reflections!

“ It is not to be supposed, said I to myself,

" myself, that Lord Averston would so
 " solemnly, and so seriously broach or af-
 " fect a falsehood. All the hopes I have
 " conceived are frustrated, all the roman-
 " tic schemes of happiness I had laid
 " down to enjoy with her are overthrown.
 " I may bid an adieu to peace, and
 " comfort. All the flattering appearances
 " of regard that I imagined were shown in
 " my favour, arose entirely from my own
 " vanity : my disappointment will suffici-
 " ently humble me for the future, and
 " punish the heart that self-love has be-
 " trayed."

I went to Sir Marmaduke's, as I had pro-
 mised Lord Averston, and like him re-
 ceived the information of their being
 gone out of town, without being able to
 find out where : the person who opened
 the door was a stranger, just left in the
 house during their absence, and who
 could give me no account of them. I
 was now in no better situation than Lord
 Averston ;

Averston; indeed in a worse, for he has yet hopes of profiting and succeeding by her good intentions towards him, whilst my hopes are all destroyed. I returned home in a most melancholly state of mind. and sat down to write to you. Though I have lost all prospect of obtaining Matilda, I cannot forget her; her image clings about my heart, and to lose the remembrance of her, I must lose my existence. But what greatly surprizes me, is, that Lord Averston should apply to me, to learn where she is gone to. He must imagine that I had some interest or some designs upon her, or in the family, by making those enquiries of me. If any thing would cause me to doubt his sincerity it is that. For to be guilty of a breach of truth is so incompatible with the sentiments of a gentleman or a man of honour, that he must deservedly forfeit the character of both, if he wilfully tells a falsehood. My long letter will

tire

LORD STANTON. 231

tire you, but I will depend on your good-nature to forgive me. Yours sincerely.

GEORGE BENSON.



LETTER LII.

TO GEORGE BENSON, Esq.

ARE not you wearied with my complaints? do, not the tedious relations of my guilty passion fatigue you? I fear they do, yet continue to communicate them: for wretched is the man, who has not a friend to whom he can impart his sorrows. From the most trivial accidents, from the smallest occurrences of life, a contemplative man may draw either instruction or amusement. You cannot be amused by the woes of your friend, but you may be instructed by his miseries. Then for that reason, learn to bear with me, let me be as a beacon

beacon to warn you from the coast where I have been cast away, to shun the rocks on which my peace and happiness have been lost. My last informed you Charlotte, the adorable Charlotte, was returned. The alteration in her temper made me fear that she liked Merton Grove too well, and the inhabitants much better. Can a lover bear the idea that a thought is bestowed on a rival which he should enjoy himself? Oh no, my friend: when you truly love, when you are acquainted with the hopes, the fears, the inexpressible inexplicable wishes which rise hourly in the breast, you will be able to comprehend my feelings, to judge of, and pity them. The intimacy that this visit created between Miss Rogers and Charlotte, and the season of the year, induced them to make frequent trips here, in which her brother ever accompanied her. The vigilant guardian of his actions, of his words, of his looks, I saw his passion painted in his countenance, and legible in
eyes,

eyes. But though these appearances in him gave me uneasiness, and more especially when I compared myself with him, yet, on the other hand, I received great satisfaction from the indifference Charlotte shewed him.

“He is not so happy then, said I to myself, as I have believed him to be; he is not the favoured lover I thought him : her heart is disengaged, and perhaps I may be so blessed as to fill the vacancy in it.”

These reflections encouraged me. I seldom left her sight, I was ever assiduous to oblige her, ever ready to attend her; I read to her while she worked, I walked with her in the gardens, we form'd little parties to the neighbouring farm houses, and I was ever contriving new pleasures for her. Thus delightfully occupied, near her person, indulged in those little innocent familiarities which will arise between two young people, always with her

her listning to the music of her tongue, captivated by her sense, I no longer opposed the violence of my passion, but gave way to it. My heart was no longer my own, *every pulse beat love*. Like the lunatic, who enjoys in his distempered imagination, though confined in a dreary and dismal cell, the sweets of the most delightful country: he roves through beautiful meadows, he hears the singing of the birds, he stretches himself on the fragrant turf, enamelled with a thousand flowers: while the delusion lasts, he is happy as if he was really in the midst of the charming scene. Such a frenzy seized me, and I determined to reveal the sentiments of my heart to her. In the cool of the evening it was usual for my mother to accompany us in our little walks, but she happened to be prevented at this time by an indisposition: the good woman feels the hand of age, too good indeed for such a son! In her absence I was resolved

solved to tell Charlotte that I loved her, and considered it as a lucky opportunity to ease my heart of the load it had long laboured under. Our walk was through a lane, where the woodbine, and other wild flowers perfumed the air. I gathered some of them, and placing some of them together in the best taste I could, offered them. She rejected them: again I entreated her to accept them; and again she refused them.

“ Ah, Charlotte, have you a mind to kill me ! If Mr. Rogers had offered these flowers you would have taken them from his hands.”

This speech, so plainly discovering my love and jealousy, filled me with confusion. I feared to have said too much, and threw my eyes on the ground, unable to look at her. She seemed also confounded: but asked me what I meant; this I considered as an encouragement to explain

plain my sentiments, and proceeded with what I had began.

“ I mean, Charlotte, that Mr. Rogers
“ has declared his passion, he loves, and
“ you are no stranger to it. I mean
“ to say that I loved you to distraction
“ before ever he saw you, that
“ my eyes, my actions might have told you
“ so : that the fear of speaking, and informing
“ you of the situation of my heart, has
“ been the means, the only means of depriving
“ me of health, and almost of life :
“ that I am totally devoted to you, and
“ am lost to every thing else in the world.
“ Blame me not then Charlotte, if my
“ soul is tormented with fear and jealousy,
“ especially when I compare myself with
“ Mr. Rogers, whether with regard to personal
“ qualifications or fortune, in every
“ thing I am his inferior, and must be
“ despised.”

“ Judge not so hardly of yourself or me;
“ of yourself, as to rate your good quali-
“ ties

"ties so low; of me, as to suppose I imagine, young and unexperienced as I am, that happiness is the attendant of fortune."

"Bless'd should I be if you could think so, lovely Charlotte! and truly so, if I could inspire you with the tender wishes that fill my breast: but I am not an object to create love. The maid, in the prime of youth and beauty, cannot condescend to think on such a wretched thing as I am, poor, forsaken, and undone!"

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Thompson, I assure you, once more, that circumstances, however fortunate, have no effect upon me."

"Perhaps then, a heart that only beats for you, that adores you with a zeal unprecedented and unutterable, may find favour in your eyes."

"That would sooner than any thing; but let me beg of you to drop this discourse,

"course, it distresses me beyond measure.

"I must return home."

"I knew it would offend you: yet forgive me, I would not displease you for the world. But had I not spoke, my heart could not have contained the fullness of its sorrows. I was sensible you would despise me, and have been endeavouring to enable myself to support scorn: it was dreadful in idea, but it is not tolerable in reality. Be not angry with me that I love you, for I cannot help it; but you shall not be offended any more with my troublesome passion, it shall remain locked up in silence in my bosom, and shall perish with me."

"Oh talk not so, Sir,—you terrify me beyond measure, it is impossible for me to despise you. But can I reconcile your present speech and conduct with the maxims you have taught me, or do you pursue the paths of patience and pru-

"dence that you have heretofore pointed
"out to me?"

"Patience, Charlotte, may enable us to
"support grief, and prudence may turn
"aside misfortune; but there is only one
"cure for love"

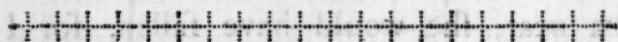
She turned homewards, and remained
silent. I was not able to speak. Our road
lay across some plough'd land. Heedless
of the path, and attentive to our former
conversation, her foot got into one of the
furrows, and she stumbled. Had I not
been near, she would have fallen, for I
caught her in my arms. The precious
maid, thus near to me, pressed to my bo-
som, clasped to my throbbing heart, arou-
sed the tenderest, the most rapturous ideas.
I detained her in my arms, which I thought
she did not dislike, but at length struggled
to get loose.

"How momentary is my happiness!"
said I, as she disengaged herself; "yet even
"that moment to be blessed, is worth all
"the

“the rest of my existence. I hope you
“are not hurt.”

She replied she was not: and as we were going home passed the rest of the way in a very significant conversation, which gave me an opportunity of addressing her again upon the same subject. What the consequence was, my next letter must inform you, for I have scarce room to subscribe myself your affectionate friend,

J. THOMPSON.



LETTER LIII.

To the same.

THE first address was the most difficult. When once Charlotte knew the secret of my heart, it was easy to resume the conversation, and incline her to listen to me. Yes, my friend, the generous maid did listen to me, she heard my tale,

tale, for I was eloquent in love. She heard it with patience, nay more, the tenderness of her nature, induced her to pity my sufferings. Pity is the parent of Love. The gentle child took up his residence in her breast. She confess'd that she esteem'd me. That the virtues of my heart had given her the first impression in my favour. Oh how severe was that stroke! My conscious guilt was visible in my face. It accused me at that moment of my perfidy, my falsehood, my breach of faith. She will hate me beyond comparison when she comes to know that I have deceived her, that she has been imposed upon, and that hypocrisy only has been the means of making me agreeable to her. As much as she esteems my sincerity and honesty now, the more will she detest me when she comes to find that I possess neither, that I have falsified my vows to another woman, and that I am offering her an heart violated with the blackest crimes.

But the die is cast : already have I told her of my passion, already have I interested her in my behalf ; the power of her charms, and the strength and violence of my love, shall crown the remembrance of my guilt, and I shall love her the better as she makes me happy. She has informed me of the steps Miss Rogers took to gain her inclinations for her brother ; she also confessed that my appearance in the garden, the morning that I interrupted them, gave her some notion of the situation of my heart ; but she assures me that Rogers had never any encouragement from her, and that she has ever endeavoured to make him silent on that subject : that she should now let his sister know, that his troubling her would be all in vain, and would prevail upon her to cause him to drop his fruitless suit. Thus secure of the affections of the woman my heart adores ; happy in her conversation ; in the mutual intercourse of our sentiments replete with love and rapture ;

ture; blessed in her presence, and enjoying all the pleasures that innocence could wish for, would not any body conclude that nothing could disturb my peace, or destroy the real happiness I appear to possess? Oh it is all imaginary. Did I not say she would cure all my woes, and heal all my pains? It is the contrary. She increases them. But for her I should have been happy in Louisa, never known a wish that she could not have gratified, never knew any other desire than in pleasing her. Charlotte's beauty has made me false to every thing that ought to be dear to me. My weak and foolish heart, captivated by her charms, has broke through all the ties that should bind a man, who regards his honour or his truth. Will they make me amends for the loss of the most valuable of all blessings, the consciousness of having acted right? Will they stifle the reproaches of my heart?—Ah no. Every time I look upon her bewitching face, my

conscience will tell me that it made me violate the most sacred vows. When I behold her enchanting form, I shall accuse myself for purchasing it, at the expence of faith and sincerity. Louisa's sighs will sound in my ears, will penetrate to my soul; her accusations, founded in justice, shall ascend to heaven, and my perfidy shall be registred against me. Then I will return to her, whom duty and honour oblige me to love, and forsake Charlotte.—Forsake Charlotte! I must forsake my being then. Can I live from her? Do not her smiles give me life? No, I cannot live from her sight. To hear her no more—no more to touch her hand, to clasp her no more to my throbbing and enraptured bosom, no more to press those vermeil lips, or inhale that breath more fragrant than the rose!—Oh it is death to think of it. To lose her for ever is distraction. Were it but for a space, where our meeting would only add an eagerness to our transports, and give a
fresh

fresh zest to our pleasures, it might be borne. But to forfeit these enjoyments for ever—No! no! my heart sinks at the thought; and my nature recoils from it, as something more terrible in its consequences than my mind can conceive, or my imagination form an idea of. Then I will adhere to Charlotte, I will not put my real happiness in competition with chimerical and ideal good.

Fame, wealth, and honour! what are you to love?

But if this possession of the lovely maid would, at least, give a temporary relief to my passion, if it would steep my senses in oblivion, I might be happy. Yet her, even her I fear to lose. A letter from Louisa, informs me that she is to return to this part of the country again very shortly. How shall I be able to see her again? Yet see her I must. How shall I meet her reproaches? How justify myself? But Charlotte will hear of her, she will take her part, and will abandon me—She will detest me. Alas, I shall be undone! Were she

less virtuous, less tender, less generous, she would perhaps think it a compliment to her, and triumph in my falsehood to Louisa; but then she would be less lovely, and could not create so strong a passion as mine. Her virtue will be shocked at the thoughts of my perfidy, her tenderness will make her pity and compassionate the unhappy sufferer, and the generosity of her sentiments will make her abhor my ingratitude. Wretched and miserable, undone as I am, which way shall I turn me to escape the woes that impend! On every side is perdition. Louisa is gentle, as the breeze of the spring that wakes the flowers of the morning, and with genial warmth expands their leaves, and calls them into life. Her nature is soft and tender: were she to know of my preferring another to her, the wrong would sink deep into her heart. It would be an incurable wound, that would deprive her of life, and I should be guilty of her death—O! heaven
guard

guard me from that thought—What a return for all the kindness she has lavished on me, for the love and tenderness she has shewn for me. In how villainous a light must I appear to Charlotte!—Adieu to all my happiness! Farewell to my peace. Misery and I must be acquainted, and shame must be my companion. Oh! instruct me how to reconcile the interests of my heart and the dictates of my honour: tell me how I shall gratify my passion, without being criminal. Ah! they cannot be reconciled, they are contrary in their nature and will not unite. Pity me, my friend, if you cannot relieve me. But whatever woes afflict me, conclude me yours truly,

J. THOMPSON.

LETTER LIV.

To Miss CLINTON.

YOU are surprized, I suppose, my dear Fanny, at the receipt of this letter, the writer being in the country, and one hundred and fifty miles from you. To be sure my journey is something in the pantomime stile, vanishing through a trap-door, or flying through the clouds, or some such experiment; but I have been able to perform this sudden change with very common and natural instruments; a post-coach, and six horses, has whirled me down to the seat of my good uncle with unusual celerity. In our former expedition we generally took a deal of time, as my aunt did not chuse to be fatigued; but now for my sake, and to secure me against my wayward fancies and roving inclinations, she has conveyed me from the scene of temptation, to groves and streams. And if I have not such opportunities

portunities of transgressing by my actions, yet I have more leisure for thinking: but do not mistake me. If I was convinced that my aunt meant this step for my good, and only to wean me from the thought of an undeserving man, to prevent his insinuations from ensnaring me, I should pay all that deference and respect to her which she merits; and so far from opposing her desires, should comply with them in every instance where my own happiness was not concerned; I had almost said eternal happiness: but to be miserable and repining at my lot here, will not fit me for felicity hereafter. Thus would I act were I convinced that her only motive for treating me in this manner proceeded from her desire of serving me: but I have reason to think otherwise; to think that she has an interest in view, to gratify which, she would not hesitate to sacrifice me. I cannot bear Lord Averston; yet she is eternally pressing me to take him: she is ignorant of

my having conceived a favourable opinion of Mr. Benson, yet she is suspicious of it, and persecutes me accordingly. She can have no reason for traducing his character that I can learn, for I am sure if she had a cause she would let me know it; therefore I cannot call her aversion to him any thing but mere prejudice, or an interested view to serve some purpose of her own. Therefore I cannot hold myself criminal in opposing her instructions, or assuming a right to determine for myself. I have already said, that if he should appear to be void of those good qualities I wish for in a man whom I would chuse from the rest of the world, that I will have nothing more to say to him, but resign him without a sigh. The partiality I had conceived for him could not escape your penetration. You upbraid me with my want of candour, and having suspected your friendship. Indeed, Fanny, it was neither. However pleased I might have been with his company and conversation,

tion, the hints which my aunt and Lord Averston have thrown out against his character, have inspired me with fear and apprehension. But I cannot, and indeed am unwilling to believe them true. To you then, my dear friend, I apply to find out for me, if you can, who he is, and what his general reputation is. Let me be satisfied in that which is of the most momentous concern to me. You have already told me, that you imagine you shall be able to get some intelligence of him. Consider my impatience, and do not delay. Has not custom imposed strange laws on our sex? It shall be judged criminal and vicious to avow the slightest inclination for a man who does not address us; that even when he does, till the eve of becoming his wife, a woman is shameless if she does not appear to have less concern for her intended husband than her lap-dog, or her parrot. Far from me be such affectation. I trust I have nothing of the wanton in
my

my disposition, nor harbour any thought which

Virgins might not hear, and angels tell.

Then I will not be afraid or ashamed to say, that were nothing else wanting to Mr. Benson than fortune, I should be glad and happy to remove every difficulty from him. But this knowledge of his qualifications must arise from an acquaintance with him, that may serve to make his temper and inclinations known to me; that, should we ever be united, I may learn to adapt myself to him, and that in me alone he may find the complying and obliging friend, ready to overlook and forgive his foibles, and to engross him by such means only, entirely to myself. But do not mistake me, Fanny; with all this blustering, I am but chicken-hearted; and though the unjust censure of the world would not affect me, yet I should not chuse to meet it when I deserved it. I would therefore avoid letting the man whom I
could

could not help favouring, into the secret of my heart; for the sex are ever ready to take advantages of us: ungenerously they act! and few there are who are worthy to have such a confidence reposed in them. Let me then be cautious, and after a trial of their merit, reward it accordingly. But I have wandered greatly from the design of this which was to inform you of my journey, and give you an account of the manner I was trap'd: for though you may not believe it, I was absolutely run away with by my uncle and aunt. In the afternoon, they propos'd taking an airing, and the post-coach was ordered out. We went away in high spirits: but as we kept a good pace, I could not help observing that we were going too far. My good aunt replied, with a smile, that we were going on very well. If she was pleas'd I was satisfied, and held my tongue. Night came on, and I could not help observing it was a long airing we were taking. My uncle replied, it

"would

"be but a short time."

would quickly end. Soon after we drove in to an inn. The frolick was new to me, nor could I conceive where it would terminate; but I was much surpris'd at finding Betty in my chamber when I was going to bed.

“So Betty, what are you taking an airing too?”

“Oh yes, madam, I came to be with you.”

“And pray how did you come?”

“Oh, Ma'am, her Ladyship's woman and I came together in a post-chaise. I have brought your trunk, Ma'am, with some of your things, and the rest will follow us.”

“And pray by whose orders have you done all this?”

“By your aunt's, Ma'am.”

“I think you should have waited for mine as you were my servant. But pray how far are we going? as I must conclude you are in my aunt's secrets, and are acquainted with our destination.”

“Indeed,

“Indeed, Ma’am, I am not sure; but
“I heard we were going to your uncle’s
“house at Greenhill Park, Ma’am.”

“And let me ask you the reason, Betty,
“why you did not let me know your pro-
“ceedings? I assure you that I disapprove
“your conduct very much.”

Here she began to stammer out an apo-
logy, and invent falsehoods which would
have pained me to have heard, so the best
means to avoid it was dismissing her, and
telling her to rest herself after her journey.
I locked my door, and went to bed. You
may suppose that my thoughts were em-
ployed in gathering my aunt’s reasons for
taking this extraordinary step: and as I
could not charge my conduct with any
great indiscretion, I was extremely surprised
at it. This sudden retreat from town,
without taking leave of my friends or ac-
quaintance, was something very unusual
and disagreeable, as it would give room to
people

people to invent something to my prejudice. Let it be what it would that occasioned it, I was determined to find it out, and resolved to begin with Lady Grigsby in the morning about it. I resigned myself to the arms of sleep, and if my dreams returned to London, you will not wonder at it, when I was snatched from it so suddenly. We were roused early in the morning, which was still more extraordinary to me, as I knew Lady Grigsby generally took her time upon all these occasions, and her present proceeding shewed that she was in great haste. She did not wait long for me: and for the more expedition a supernumerary pair of horses were added, which we changed at every stage: so we seemed to fly. We sat silent some time after we got into the carriage, and the trite observations, of, “ ’Tis a fine morning,” and, “ ’tis better to travel in the cool of the morning at this time of the year when the dust flies so, and it is so hot in the middle of the day ;”

all

all being worn out, we seemed at a loss what to say, and I resolved to have the pleasure of hearing my aunt explain herself.

“ This is a pretty long airing, Sir Mar-
“ maduke; when are we to finish it?”

My aunt prevented his saying any thing, by replying herself, “ When we get to
“ Greenhill Park, my dear.”

“ Really, Madam, that was a journey
“ I had no notion of taking so suddenly,
“ and I should have been extremely oblig-
“ ed to you, if you had given me any no-
“ tice of it, that I might have provided
“ myself with some things I wanted in
“ town, and have taken leave of my
“ friends.”

“ Oh, child, the latter may be easily
“ remedied when you return to town again,
“ and you may have whatever you want
“ sent down to you.”

“ But pray, Madam, what necessity was
“ there for this secrecy and haste?”
“ indeed,”

“ Indeed, Matilda, I think *you* should
 “ not ask me that question, for *your* conduct
 “ can best explain the necessity of this
 “ proceeding.”

“ You really astonish me now, Madam,
 “ more than before, if possible. But as I
 “ do not recollect that I have behaved in
 “ such a manner as would warrant the tak-
 “ ing of this step, I shall be much oblig-
 “ ed to you to inform me of what my crime
 “ is.”

“ Oh, Matilda, your aunt’s in the right,”
 said Sir Marmaduke.

“ Pray, Sir Marmaduke, give me leave to
 “ speak to my niece. I am at a loss how
 “ to think you should be ignorant of the
 “ cause of this journey; and as to the
 “ private manner in which it has been
 “ conducted, it was all upon your ac-
 “ count. But as you desire to have this
 “ affair explained, I shall indulge you;
 “ though I am extremely unwilling to dis-
 “ close your foibles even to your uncle, or
 “ to think of them myself. My regard
 “ for

“for you alone induces me to take this
 “trouble so foreign to my temper, and to
 “which my disposition is so much averse.
 “But to save you from ruining yourself,
 “and destroying your reputation, which,
 “through my care, has been hitherto un-
 “blemished, I would spare no pains, how-
 “ever disagreeable.”

This speech nettled me; it contained in-
 sinuations I could not bear. My reply
 was expressed with some warmth, and I
 imagine did not please her ladyship.

“You need not be angry, child,” said
 she, “for that shews your consciousness of
 “my having acted right; but you will be
 “pleased with me hereafter. However,
 “as my conduct towards you is regulated
 “by love and affection, and governed by
 “discretion, I shall not be accountable for
 “it. I think, Matilda, that I am very
 “justifiable in removing you, thus pri-
 “vately, from a place, where you were
 “going to form a connexion with a man,
 “whose

“whose character, at best, is but very du-
 “bious, and, were it thoroughly known,
 “I suppose truly villainous. And to re-
 “ject the addresses of Lord Averston, a
 “nobleman, whose heart is devoted to you,
 “and whose fortune and interest will raise
 “you to that rank in life you deserve to
 “fill. But, exclusive of that, it gave me
 “the greatest uneasiness to think, after
 “you had given him such encouragement,
 “and he had formed such hopes from
 “your behaviour—”

I could not help interrupting her, by
 saying, that I perfectly remembered every
 transaction between us, and that I could
 not recollect ever having given Lord Aver-
 ston cause to boast of any encouragement.
 But I find I have filled up my paper, shall
 therefore reserve the remaining part of this
 conversation for another letter, from your
 affectionate, &c.

MATILDA CONYERS.

The END of the THIRD VOLUME.